UNFOLDING YEARS

THE EVENTS OF A LIFETIME
AS RECALLED AND WRITTEN

by

Adelia M. Hoyt

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FOUNDATION

15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y., 10011

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Published by
Walter Conway & Associates
Washington, D.C.
November, 1950

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To the memory of my beloved sister

EMMA C. DeGROFF

my companion and guide through
most of my life's long journey,
whose wise counsel and encour-
agement helped me to overcome
many difficulties

I lovingly dedicate this little volume

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the final preparation of this manuscript I have had the able assistance of Miss Violet M. Savage, formerly my secretary for nearly sixteen years. Her long association with me and her familiarity with many of the incidents which I have related, especially those connected with my work in the Library of Congress, have made her help invaluable. It is with heartfelt gratitude that I make this acknowledgment.

Adelia M. Hoyt

Washington, D. C.
November 1950.

UNFOLDING YEARS

CHILDHOOD

When one stands near the end of life's long trail and looks back over the winding road, there are parts utterly hidden from view and other spots which stand out clearly in the light of memory. As we recall scenes and events of our childhood, there is always the question as to just how much we actually remember of what happened and how much we have been told so often, that it seems a part of our own memory. Just when does a child begin to record things for future reference? Evidently there must be some intelligence and understanding to form mental pictures and these vary in different children.

I have been told that I came into this world on a very cold, bleak Sunday morning, December 3, 1865. It was so cold that the big stove in the living room of the farm house could not keep the place comfortable. The frost was thick on the panes of the one window in the big bedroom where my mother and I lay. A doctor from Cedar Falls, two and a half miles distant, and a neighbor woman had officiated at my advent, but it was my sister Mary, aged fifteen, who was left to carry on. My mother was very ill and I have often heard her say that it was my sister Mary's care that saved her life and mine.

My father had married a widow with three girls. The oldest, Clara Anet, was married while I was still a baby so I have no recollections of her at home. But my sister Mary was a tower of strength in the family and even after her marriage, as long as she was able, she came to us in times of sickness and helped in all emergencies. She always seemed like a second mother to me. Of my sister Emma, who was eight

and a half years old when I was born, I shall have much to say hereafter for we were companions in childhood and have been all these many, many years. Being fourteen months old when her own father died, and only six when my father and mother were married, she knew no other father than mine and I am sure that he came to love her as much as if she was his very own.

It was in the closing years of the Civil War that my parents arrived from Wisconsin and my father broke the sod on the Iowa prairie and built the little house where I was born. We might have been well termed pioneers in Iowa for Cedar Falls in 1863 was at the end of the Illinois Central Railroad. Bess Streeter Aldrich in her book, "Song of Years," has well described this town but under the name of "Sturgis Falls."

Even after these many years, how well I can recall every detail of that little country home. It consisted of one large room which served as living room and kitchen. A big cook stove separated the two parts. On the one side was the living room with its home-made rag carpet, a lounge which could be made into a double bed, a few chairs including a large cane seat maple rocker which was my cradle; there was also a front door and two windows through which came broad shafts of eastern sun. On the other side of the stove the floor was painted and here was the table, a few kitchen chairs, and the big cupboard which contained our dishes and food stuffs. Here too was the back door and west window from which I often watched the setting sun. A lean-to back of this room served as storehouse in winter and as summer kitchen in warm weather, when the stove was moved out and we all felt the freedom of more space.

South of the living room were two small rooms known as the big and little bedrooms. The big bedroom where I first saw the light of day was to the front of the house. It contained the large old-fashioned bed, one east window over which clambered a yellow honeysuckle, a big closet into whose mysterious shadows I remember peering with vague, childish terror. There too was the old-fashioned bureau with

its swinging mirror on top. One of my earliest recollections is climbing on a chair to survey myself in this glass. I must have been about five years old for what I distinctly recall seeing was a very little girl with big solemn blue eyes, fair skin with light brown hair which could be made to curl with very little help. I do not think I was specially anxious to see myself but I was proud of the red merino dress which I wore, the goods for which had been a gift from my grandpa Hoyt. It had narrow ruffles at the neck and around the wrists, and narrow black velvet ribbon about the bottom of the skirt and the belt. I still have the picture of me taken in this dress and everyone who sees it can still trace the resemblance, even after all the changes of these many, long years.

My grandparents were born in Connecticut and later moved to central New York where both my parents were born. When my father was fourteen, the family moved to Janesville, Wisconsin, going by way of the newly built Erie Canal. My grandfather Hoyt was a contractor and builder, and as a young man my father learned the carpenter's trade working with his father; but he was not strong and craved an education. He attended the Academy in Beloit, Wisconsin, and spent one year in a commercial school in Boston. Returning to Janesville, he took a position as bookkeeper with a large grocery firm. The confinement proved detrimental to his health and a tendency to lung trouble developed. His physician advised outdoor occupation; he gave up bookkeeping and again went to work with his father as a carpenter. His health improved but he was rejected for military service, hence he had no part in the Civil War which was now on.

In the meantime, my mother's people had moved to New York where she was born. Her mother died at her birth; she was reared by an aunt who gave her all the privileges of training and education common to those in moderate circumstances in those days, plus a term or two at a young ladies' finishing school. She was married young to John DeGroff and they set up housekeeping near Auburn, N. Y. After three daughters were born to them, John sickened and died of typhoid

fever and for many weeks his young wife seemed likely to follow him. Later the young widow came to Janesville, Wisconsin, where an older sister, Mary, resided with her husband and three sons. Here my father and mother met and renewed an acquaintance which had begun back in New York, and in time this ripened into love, and they were married.

My mother, Caroline Mix DeGroff, was a very attractive young woman; my father, an old bachelor, unhesitatingly assumed the burden of her three daughters and proved the kindest of stepfathers. He had already purchased land in Iowa near the little town of Cedar Falls, and there he took his ready-made family in 1863. I was the only child of this union and it was well for us all, especially for my parents and me, that we had those other girls.

It was the spring after I was five years old that my parents took a well earned vacation and with their little daughter returned to Janesville, Wisconsin, for a brief visit with relatives. And now memory was beginning to record events. Although this was my first ride on a train, requiring a whole day and several changes, I have no recollection of the trip going. But of things in Janesville, I distinctly recall my impressions. My Aunt Mary and Uncle Sam lived in a large brown house which to the little country girl seemed like a veritable mansion. How I loved Aunt Mary's darkened parlor with its marble topped center table, its haircloth covered furniture on which I loved to climb and slide off. And there was the carriage drawn by two fine horses in gleaming harness and the two carriage lamps. To the little country child who had never ridden in anything but a lumber wagon or sleigh in winter, this was the acme of elegance.

My Aunt Adelia's home was equally fine but my chief recollections of this place consists of the large yard surrounded by a white picket fence. A long board walk ran from the gate to the house and how I loved to run up and down that walk! Aunt Adelia was fond of her little namesake and showed me many kindnesses in the years that followed. Her youngest child, my cousin Jessie just four years my senior, also showed me special attention both on this visit and for all the years that followed.

One incident of the return trip stands out either from actual memory or from hearing the story from others. I have heard my mother tell that when away from home I would never stay put. If she told me to sit still in a certain place while she went to do something, she no sooner turned her back than I was at her heels. I seemed to have a horror of being left behind and this time perhaps it was justified. We were boarding the train for our returning journey and my father had just lifted me to the platform of the car. He turned and he and my mother were saying farewell to the relatives gathered there, when without warning the train began to move. Following my usual procedure I tried to get off the train. Aunt Adelia tried to catch me and broke her parasol. The conductor caught me just in time and carried me to a seat inside the car where my father, who had swung onto one of the passing cars, found me. The train which was only switching soon was back at the station where we were all re-united and on our way.

On reaching home I was taken very ill with what the doctor called brain fever. It was generally believed that it was brought on by the fright I had when boarding the train. Personally, I have always doubted that the two had any connection, but that illness was the beginning of the tragedy which was to overshadow the whole of my life. It was a frail delicate child who emerged from that sick room, and soon it was apparent to all that something was wrong with my eyes. I could not see as other children. Just to what extent my sight was lacking it was difficult to tell. I have no idea just when the realization dawned on me and it is a comfort to know that the child was incapable of grasping the meaning of the tragedy.

I must have been nearly six when there were great preparations in our house for the wedding of my sister Mary. The fortunate young man was the eldest son of a neighboring and well-to-do farmer. My father had built an addition to our little home consisting of a parlor, parlor bedroom, pantry which opened into our old kitchen, and stairway which led to two rooms above. I can still see distinctly the frosted cakes drying by the big stove and the furnishings of the new parlor where the wedding took place. There was the

home-made rag carpet on the floor while the paper on the walls was rich in pattern of autumn leaves. A big sheet iron stove gave out a cozy warmth on that wedding night in November.

I recall only one incident of that evening. My best girl friend and neighbor, Ida Robbins, and I shared a large home-made stool, a box covered with some kind of bright colored cloth. During the evening, our minister who had come out from town to perform the ceremony, came to us in our corner. Laying his hand on my head and looking down at me he said in solemn tones: "Never mind my child, you will have good eyes in heaven." What strange consolation to offer a child of six - and I can still after all these years feel the resentment and antagonism it aroused in me.

Each spring for several years I had a long spell of fever and after each one my sight failed. To conceal this fact I strained every nerve. I was so frail that I had no desire to go out and play with other children, and also I shrank from their learning that I was not just like them. I spent the winters mostly curled up on the lounge back of the big stove pretending to read, but in reality making up stories of my own or playing with imaginary companions. I had my rag dolls and paper dolls, and one with a china head sent me by my cousin Jessie and named for her; but my imaginary family was much larger and more interesting. In summer I had my swing and playhouse under the trees but my play was never very strenuous, and I liked best to live in a make-believe world.

My parents were well educated for frontier folk. The summer before my arrival my mother had taught school in our house. After a schoolhouse was built my father taught the winter terms. Some of the farmers were planning to send their sons and daughters to college and the fact that my father knew something of higher mathematics and Latin made him a desirable teacher. My sister Emma taught her first country school when she was fifteen, and from that time on she taught school in the summer and attended school in the winter.

We all loved books. I am told that I could read fairly well at four. Our supply of reading matter was exceedingly limited. Our home library, as I recall, consisted of the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, a History of the World, Milton's Paradise Lost, a volume of Scott's Poems, and Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy. Before my sight had failed too much I had read Pilgrim's Progress and learned much from the History of the World, fascinated by its colored maps. To keep me from using my eyes too much my parents and sister Emma formed the habit of reading aloud, and this proved a great source of pleasure to us all for many, many years. We had our weekly paper, the Cedar Falls Gazette, a few magazines, and borrowed books.

My people were Baptists and belonged to the church in Cedar Falls, which we attended regularly. We read many books from the Sunday School library. In this way I became acquainted with Louisa M. Alcott's Little Women, Eight Cousins, Rose in Bloom, all the Pansy Books, as well as E. P. Roe's Opening a Chestnut Burr, and many others. We exchanged current magazines with the neighbors, but the greatest thrill of all I found in the New York Ledger which one of our neighbors took and loaned to us. How I reveled in the stories of Mrs. Southworth, Harriet Lewis and Sylvanus Cobb! I do not think my father exactly approved of this sort of literature, but he did not seek to impose his taste on us; and I know that in the long run it did us no harm. Personally, I am sure it stimulated my imagination, broadened my rather narrow outlook on life, and enabled me the better to recognize and appraise good literature when I found it later on.

I suppose we were poor, but I at least never realized it because I never felt the need of anything I did not have. Father was always in debt, there were crop failures, and there were my doctor's bills. My parents worked hard and no doubt they missed many of the comforts they had "back east," but in our home we had godliness, cleanliness and love. We raised much of our food and sold butter and eggs to buy our

clothing. We had many simple pleasures - reading aloud evenings, playing games such as checkers, dominoes, fox and geese, and puzzles of which I learned to be very fond. We had visitors from town and our neighbors often dropped in.

My Uncle Sam visited us once or twice a year when on his way to and from western Iowa where he had some interest in land. His coming was an event for he always brought me candy of the fancy kind. I presume I was forbidden to eat much candy, but I do not remember having any desire for it. I loved to look at it, to play with it, read or have read to me the mottos on the hearts of peppermints, and look through the lovely transparency of the rock crystal candy balls. What delight there was in the chocolate mouse and bright colored gum drops! This kind of entertainment usually lasted me from one visit to the next.

When my sister Mary married she and her husband, Otis West, began housekeeping in Cedar Falls, where he was to study law. In November before I was nine, their first and only child, a daughter named Nettie, was born. I well remember the time. Mother was with them for several days leaving sister Emma to look after my father and me. At that particular time Uncle Sam paid us a surprise visit. Emma was quite equal to the occasion and knowing our uncle's fondness for pumpkin pie, she produced one to my great admiration. That evening, it having snowed, we all piled into the sleigh and went down town to see the new baby. As soon as Emma began earning money teaching, little as it was, she generously shared it with us all. Many little comforts found their way into the home. For me there were new hair ribbons, a new dress, a pair of pretty vases and a picture of two kittens which I though adorable.

Up to this time a lumber wagon, with high spring seat in front and a board seat or chairs in back, had been our only means of transportation. My little wooden rocker was often put in between for me. Then we acquired a one seated top buggy. Mother and I had been spending the day with a neighbor about a half mile away. It was early spring but still cold and gray. Late in the afternoon, father drove up after us with the

new buggy. I can still feel the glow of childish pride with which I climbed in the new buggy, and we drove home. One of the team of grays, with which my father had started work on the farm, had died and Pete the remaining one now had a gentle mare Nellie for his companion. She became our buggy horse and I learned to harness her and put her into the shafts of the new buggy and bring her up to the house.

The desire for a top buggy no doubt was stimulated the year before when we had some visitors. My father's aunt, Aunt Cornelia, a widow of uncertain age, had married one Peleg Marsh, and they set out in a covered buggy drawn by a little gray horse named Pet to spend their honeymoon among their relatives. It was summer when they arrived and they decided to make a side trip, leaving the horse and buggy with us. You may be sure we used the occasion to take rides. I well recall one evening when Emma and I took a long ride through back country roads, and as usual, I imagined I was the heroine in some story of adventure. I can still see one place on that country road with the woods on either side, and as we climbed a hill the head of our little horse was outlined against the evening sky. Aunt Cornelia and Uncle Peleg seemed ancient to Emma and me, and their sentimental talk and actions furnished us with much amusement.

One day in company with my father and mother they went some miles distant to visit some old friends of the family. That day Emma became ambitious and decided to do the ironing. It included a shirt for Uncle Peleg with its starched and ruffled bosom. After laboring with it until her patience was exhausted, she suddenly rolled it up and opening the back door threw it into the depths of the back yard. It struck me immensely funny, but it was no laughing matter to Emma so I did not dare laugh until I was out of sight when I gave way to my mirth; but at the same time my sympathies were all with her. Later I know she retrieved the shirt and no doubt my mother ironed it next day. Strange how such small events and scenes are forever fixed in the memory.

With such homely little events passed the first ten years of my life. My sight was gradually failing,

but so slowly that not even I, much less those about me, realized how little I could see. I had practised a regular form of deception which fooled even those nearest to me. I was sent on errands to neighbors or to the men working in the fields, and I had to use every art I could devise to find my way. As I think back on some of these adventures I marvel that I did not sometimes come to grief. Surely some kind providence watched over me and kept me from harm.

I only had to hear something read once or twice to know it by heart, and guided by pictures or big head lines I could make a pretence of reading. As I have said we went quite regularly to church and Sunday School. After the sermon I would find my way unaided to my class. Holding the Quarterly like the others I would read my verse in my turn like the rest, it having been read to me at home. There were times when everything was obscured by a thick smoke-like mist before my eyes; then this would clear away and I could see quite distinctly.

Sometime during those years my father took me to see a new doctor in Cedar Falls. We climbed a long flight of stairs to his office, and I was put through a lot of tests where I fear even my cleverness at make-believe failed to fool this doctor. At last he turned to my father and said: "Mr. Hoyt, I did not know you had a blind child." I can still hear the pain in my father's voice as he replied: "We don't call her blind." As we rode home, silent for the most part, there was a great ache in my heart, not for the little girl sitting there but for the man beside her whose hurt I seemed to feel far more than my own. Youth and ignorance mercifully kept me from realizing the full meaning of that word "blind," but I knew that it hurt my father whom I loved so dearly. I resolved then and there that in some way or other I would make it up to him.

If in these pages I seem to speak more of my father than of my mother, it is not because I loved him more. Father and I were much alike and seemed to understand each other. Mother had her other three girls, and while father had been a real father to them, and I am sure he loved Emma as if she were his own,

still after all I was his own flesh and blood and his only child. I know that both my parents grieved much over my failing sight, despite the consolation given them by our family physician that they need not worry too much as I would never live to grow up.

When I was ten our relatives in Janesville, Wisconsin, wrote of a famous eye doctor who was doing wonders for many of the children at the Wisconsin School for the Blind, and they suggested that I be brought there for examination. It must have meant quite a sacrifice for my parents to get together enough money for the trip, but no effort was too great if my sight could be restored. So my mother and I prepared for the long journey. The train left Cedar Falls at midnight. Father took us to town early in the evening and we visited with friends until train time.

It was June and a terrific thunderstorm was gathering, so we hastened to the station. After we boarded the train I remember that for the rest of the night the windows were sheets of flame from the continuous lightning. On the way home my father found a bridge washed away and spent the rest of the night with a neighboring farmer. A train ride was no pleasure to me for until I was fully grown it always made me deathly sick. This was an especially hard trip as we had to change cars three times and did not reach our destination until the next evening.

Of that visit I recall only a few incidents. In the doctor's office I went through the usual test, for when at my best I could still read large letters if not too far away. Whether this doctor was entirely a fake or possessed some slight skill, I know not, but he was quite sure that he could help me with glasses. He proposed to fit me with two pair, one for steady wear and one for reading, and for these he wanted One Hundred Dollars. I can imagine this seemed quite a sum to my poor parents. Letters were exchanged with my father and arrangements made whereby my Uncle Edwin, my Aunt Adelia's husband, agreed to loan my father the money at ten per cent interest.

Our home coming like our departure was in the night. Father met us at the station and we drove home through the warm darkness. How good it seemed to be

home again! -- The cheerful light of the kerosene lamp, the teakettle singing on the stove, the table set with plenty of good bread and butter, fresh radishes and little onions from the garden. Father had kept house alone while we were gone as Emma was away teaching. He was so glad to have us back and to hear all about the folks in Janesville, and the wonderful doctor. But mother hustled me off to bed and I recall a delightful feeling of sinking down as the flowers in the wallpaper seemed to swim round and round before I closed my eyes in sleep.

As to the help I received from those glasses, although they magnified slightly, they drew on my eyes and were so uncomfortable that no amount of coaxing or bribing prevailed, and it was not long before they were abandoned altogether. In another way our trip was worth while. That doctor told my mother that she must build up my physical condition by keeping me out-of-doors as much as possible. From then on many plans were devised to keep me in the open. I was encouraged to help with the chickens, gather the eggs, help my father feed the pigs and other stock. I used to follow my father about repeating to him the stories that were read to me. I had little fear of anything on the farm except one cow, Daisy, who had a decided antipathy for me. If I approached the fence and she caught sight of me she would come rushing with lowered head and shaking horns. As she had the ability of opening any gate you can imagine that I was in a constant state of alarm and in my dreams Daisy often pursued me.

In the winters, instead of being curled up behind the stove making up stories, I was dressed warmly and sent out to slide down hill on my sled. I was still shy of children and there were really few of my age within reach. Whenever my sister Emma could she shared these winter sports with me. In those days the snow often piled in huge drifts, eight and ten feet high, with a hard crust on top. We would climb to the top and slide down. I can remember one winter when the men dug tunnels in these drifts through which we drove to town.

Whether it was that this outdoor life began to have its effect or that I was outgrowing the tendency, the fact remains that the next spring for the first time in several years I escaped the fever and long illness which had for so long sapped my vitality. For the next two years I continued to live much of the time in the open, breathing the sweet, clean air of the Iowa prairies and gaining in physical strength. I was still a very frail looking child, somewhat undersize, but I think in those days was laid the foundation of what has proved in later years, in spite of many struggles, to be a real tenacity to hold on to life.

My people valued an education above most of those early pioneers. My delicate health, as well as my defective sight, prevented me from attending the country school two miles distant. My parents grieved over this, but the kind old family physician told them that my brain was growing too fast for my body, and that I must be discouraged rather than encouraged to use it. He always added that comforting assurance that it was not likely I would live to grow up. But nothing could prevent me from picking up knowledge from those around me or stop my brain from being filled with all sorts of busy fancies. From the books and magazines read aloud I learned much, for I lived over in imagination all the experiences of the various characters. When my sister Emma began going to high school, and later when she attended the State Normal School about two miles from us, on our side of town, she would often read her lessons aloud. In this way I memorized much that I could not understand but which I stored up for future use, thus keeping my mental processes alert.

As my health improved my parents began teaching me in a rather desultory fashion. My father made me a blackboard and on stormy winter days he taught me to write on it and also learn the rudiments of arithmetic. I made my letters and figures large in order to see them. My father, who had some knowledge of music and loved it, drew on the blackboard the staff and taught me music notation. Mother gave me lessons in grammar and she also taught me to

sew and knit. I helped with the housework, not so much because my family wished it, but more to satisfy my own inner urge to do things. From an early age I seemed to resent not being allowed to do what another child of my age would be expected to do. Sometimes I think I really outdid other children in really hard work. I washed and dried dishes, set table, made beds, dusted, washed windows and cleaned lamp chimneys. I never was so happy as when praised for some work which I knew I had done well.

And so the time passed. I do not know just when my parents decided to send me to the Iowa School for the Blind. It must have cost them a bitter struggle for it meant that they had accepted the fact that I was blind. To send me away from home must have seemed little short of cruel; but to them an education meant everything and they wisely thought of my future. A school for the blind was not entirely a new idea to my father. His youngest sister, Maria, for whom I was named, lived in Janesville, Wisconsin, at the time when Doctor Howe sent a young blind man out from Boston to organize the Wisconsin School for the Blind. My aunt, then a girl of seventeen, became his assistant. This young man, whose name has escaped me, was a brilliant scholar, but intemperate and frequently incapacitated. This threw the management of the school on my Aunt Maria's young shoulders. It was she who alone took a group of students to the Wisconsin legislature and secured their first appropriation.

Later this blind man was dismissed and was superseded by a sighted man, one Alec McDonald. He too was sent out by Doctor Howe. This young man was probably less gifted and far less interested in the blind, yet was able with the help of my aunt to establish the Wisconsin School on a firm foundation. He also won the heart of Aunt Maria. Soon after their marriage they left the school and returned to Boston. They were intimate with the Howe family and when their first child, a little girl, arrived she was named Julia for Mrs. Julia Ward Howe. Two other children were born to them, both boys.

Then came the Civil War and young Alec McDonald, now an M. D., enlisted. Malaria and long

confinement in a southern prison undermined his health and soon after returning home he developed tuberculosis. His young wife sickened and died -- and he was not long in following her. Alec's mother assumed the charge of the children and reared them with infinite care. The boys when grown struck out for themselves and Fred, the older, came to us one summer on the farm. He was a good worker although he made it plain this was just an interval in his life. To me he seemed quite an exalted personage -- for was he not from Boston!

How vividly I recall a dark autumn evening when I perched high up in the corn-crib. By the light of a lantern hung aloft, Cousin Fred shoveled in a load of freshly husked corn, and at the same time recited the Lord's Prayer in French for my edification. He had lived close to the Perkins Institution in Boston and for some strange reason he was much opposed to my going to a school for the blind. Evidently this had little weight with my parents and the matter was soon settled.

It was a cold winter day when some literature arrived from the school at Vinton, thirty-five miles away by rail, down the Cedar river. There was a speller in raised print. I had already learned to read by touch the letters on bottles, our kitchen stove and some of the farm machinery, so I soon mastered the speller. Among the material sent was a list of the pupils enrolled. I was much intrigued by the names of the girls and immediately selected some about whom to weave all sorts of stories.

My childhood chum, Ida Robbins, and her family who had moved into town, were still our visiting friends and we saw much of them. The next summer the Robbins family had a visit from a distant relative, named Lorana Mattice. This young woman was blind, had been a student at the school at Vinton and was now a teacher there. One afternoon Emma drove into town and brought Miss Mattice out to see me, and she stayed for supper. This was my first real contact with someone who couldn't see, and I fear I felt much as sighted people do when they first meet up with those who cannot see. I remember she took me on

her lap and examined my hair and dress; I was wearing a blue and white muslin with ruffles and she said it was pretty. She told me about the little girls I would have to play with at school, of one Kitty who came by herself on the train passing through our town and this fall she was bringing another little girl with her. Miss Mattice brought with her a copy of the Psalms in raised letters which she left with me, and before September came I had read it through several times.

Some years before this sister Mary's father-in-law had sold his large farm near us and moved to Illinois where he had purchased a large tract of land. He persuaded his oldest son, my brother-in-law Otis, to cast in his fortune with him. So it was that my sister Mary and her little girl moved to southern Illinois. Bad crops, storms and malaria ruined them financially, and almost physically. The father died and the family scattered. Mary and her little girl returned to us while her husband sought work elsewhere. Nettie was a dear little thing and I loved her -- and we had many good times together. She was just learning to read and I taught her figures. Together we worked out puzzles and she read much to me.

That summer, before I left for school, is rather hazy in my mind. I know extra dresses were made for me, and I was to take Emma's trunk as she was to teach that fall near home. I do not recall that I was very much excited. I had already decided in my own mind to be a writer and I had some sort of notion that I must learn what had already been written, hence an education was very necessary. On my last Sunday in Sunday School, my teacher told the class that I was going away to school where I would study music and maybe come back some day and play the organ. And so the summer slipped away and closed the first chapter in my life story. I did not know it then -- but when I left that fall I was never to return to the farm to live -- and only once to visit.

In looking back now it seems as if I had very little childhood. So much of the time had been spent in bed and in the struggle for my very existence. I was rather old for my age and my thoughts were

solemn ones. Yet I had not been unhappy. I was surrounded by love and care and I had my beautiful dreams in which I passed my happiest hours. Out of that past I carried pictures which have remained with me and have been a constant comfort when finally the curtain fell -- completely shutting out the light.

After all these years those impressions are still vivid and have been my guide in forming mental pictures of my surroundings. I have continued to visualize everything -- and still love to recall how the sunset looked across the back fields of snow in winter, how the shadows moved across the grass, the colors in the flowers, the moonlight as it lay across the floor at night. I can hear the swaying of the wind in the big cottonwood trees and smell the plum blossoms as we drove along the country road. I can still see the autumn colors in the woods -- the reds and the yellows. Of people's faces I have less recollection, and many of the scenes I recall are only in outline; perhaps even then my imagination completed the picture. But to me they are all very near and dear and have been a great comfort all through the years. My life ahead stretched like an unknown land -- but I entered it with hope and no fear.

SCHOOL DAYS

It was Wednesday, September 17, 1879, that mother and I arrived in Vinton, a little country town located on the banks of the Cedar river about half way between Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids. School was late in opening that year, due I believe to some repairs on the building. The school bus met us at the station and we were driven a short distance to the Institution, known then and for many years thereafter as the Iowa College for the Blind -- I. C. B. for short.

We were admitted at the back door near which was the sitting room of the Superintendent, Rev. Robert Caruthers and his family. It was unusually cold for that time of year and although the building was heated by steam it was hardly comfortable. No doubt this fact made me appreciate and remember the warm, bright room into which we were ushered. A big stove gave off a mellow warmth. A canary singing in the sunny south window made the place homelike. I shall always be grateful for partial sight in those days which enabled me to get a picture of my surroundings. Mrs. Caruthers, who acted as Matron, received us graciously, and soon her husband came in and kindly interviewed me. We were taken to the big dining room in the basement where we ate our dinner at the Superintendent's table. I recall that we had grape pie and I wondered what to do with the seeds for I never swallowed them, but how it was settled I fail to remember.

After dinner, Miss Lorana Mattice, the blind lady whom I had met the previous summer, was summoned and she took me in charge. Out in the long hall she introduced me to Kitty of whom she had told me during her summer visit, and we were left to get acquainted. Kitty who had been in school for a year or more knew all about the place. She introduced me to other girls and proceeded to show me around. She conducted me to the front door, across a wide porch,

down steps and along a broad gravel walk to the front gate.

The school was housed in a large main building fronting the east. On either side were the north and south wings with long verandas across the front and one in the rear. The building was four stories including the basement which was mostly above ground. Ten acres of land surrounded the buildings with plenty of trees and shrubs. Across the front was a stone wall about two or three feet high and the same in width. Later this wall was surmounted by an ornamental iron fence, but in my day the wall was clear. A favorite pastime was for two girls with arms entwined to run up and down this wall. Some of the girls like myself had enough sight to guide a companion, and if occasionally we fell off into the short evergreen hedge below, so much the more fun. But this all came later.

That first afternoon Kitty showed me the big jars filled with plants which stood on top of the wall on either side of the front gate. Kitty kept exclaiming "Oh girls!" and each time I reminded her that I was only one. I am sure she thought me rather stupid and irresponsive -- and so I was. However, it did not take me long to change in the genial atmosphere of my new surroundings.

The next morning I entered the class room. At that time the school curriculum covered nine grades known as: First and Second Primary; Intermediate; First, Second and Third Junior; First, Second and Third Senior. In the first three grades the teachers covered all subjects and each had her own class room. After that there were instructors for different subjects and the pupils moved from one class room to the other. A young pupil or one who had little previous training, on entering the lower grades, was likely to remain two years in each, thus making her school life extend over ten or twelve years. Since I had received some instruction at home I was entered in the Second Primary with Miss Mattice in charge. She was an excellent teacher and became my example and inspiration. As I was regularly promoted I finished in eight years. I can truthfully say they were among the happiest years of my life.

Mother remained over Sunday, then departed for home. So long as she was there we occupied a guest room on the second floor, but after her departure I was assigned to a room on the fourth floor with three other girls, all older than myself. In those days little provision was made for young children and the little girl's department where Kitty roomed was full. Probably I had a more grown-up demeanor and that may have influenced the matron in placing me with older girls. Of my first three roommates little more need be said since after that first year we were no longer together.

I took easily to the school routine. We rose at six with the rising bell, had breakfast at six-thirty, chapel at seven, and went immediately to classes. A bell rang every period and we had five minutes between classes, with a longer recess in the middle of the forenoon. In this way we covered the subjects of arithmetic, geography, history, reading and spelling, and were through in time for dinner at twelve. The afternoon was given over to handwork, music and physical training. At four-thirty we were free to amuse ourselves until supper at five-thirty. In the evening we had chapel at seven, after which we were divided into groups according to age and one of the sighted teachers read aloud for an hour. The rest of the evening we studied or practised the piano, if a practise period had been assigned to us for that time. At nine the retiring bell sounded and at nine-thirty the silence bell, and woe to anyone heard talking after that time. Teachers patroled the halls to see that all was quiet.

This regular schedule proved most beneficial to me in many ways. I formed the habit of living by a definite plan, which if sometimes monotonous and often irksome has stayed with me all my life. Being considered a frail child I had been rather inactive. While I learned to do many things, and enjoyed helping mother in the house and father out-of-doors, I was not "required" to do anything. I slept poorly and never in the daytime as other children; often I lay awake all night, falling asleep near morning, and for this reason I was allowed to sleep late. The first

night at the school I did not close my eyes; I was too excited to sleep, but I had to rise at six next morning. In less than two weeks I could go to bed at nine and sleep soundly all night.

I had also been a very small eater, had been humored and allowed to live mostly on fruit and delicacies. As a child I cannot even remember being hungry. The food at the school was no doubt wholesome and sufficient, but certainly not tempting. For a time I ate scarcely anything but no notice was taken of it. Finally nature asserted itself; I began to be hungry and soon was able to eat the plainest of food. I refused meat altogether and for many years was a strict vegetarian.

At the time all these things were of minor consideration. It was in the life of the schoolroom that I found my greatest satisfaction. My eager mind absorbed knowledge as the thirsty ground drinks up the rain. I had been starving for the very things now offered me. We had no books from which to study; our lessons were given to us orally by the teacher. In our spare hours we got together and went over the lessons as best we could remember them.

We had no gymnasium but at four o'clock in the afternoon we assembled in the large concert hall on the top floor of the north wing, and here under the guidance of the head lady teacher we went through various exercises, accompanied by music. First there were free gymnastics for beginners, followed later by dumb bells, rings and wands. Walking was another form of exercise and I should say the most frequent. In good weather girls might be seen with arms about each other, walking up and down the long verandas or down on the front walk. In bad weather the long halls offered opportunity for this exercise. Sometimes as many as a half dozen girls would be so lined up, tramping up and down, chanting a lesson in geography or history; or it might be just two intimate friends would be seen walking together, exchanging confidences in low tones. During my school days I must have walked hundreds of miles inside and outside the dear old I. C. B.

These regular habits, pleasant companionship, the joy of being occupied every hour of the day, and above all the love of study, developed the frail, shy girl of thirteen into a more nearly normal being. While I never became robust I acquired a measure of normal health and though still rather sober, I began to have a real childhood which I had missed in my early years. The struggle and pretence to see which I had kept up for so long was no longer necessary--and oh what a blessed relief! Now I worked and played with those like myself and I was not expected to "see."

In those days little effort was made to find and bring young children into the school. Later this was done; kindergartens were established, and the education of the blind became more normal. Already the Perkins Institution in Boston, the New York Institute, New York City, and the Overbrook School in Philadelphia, were making history in the field of education. These institutions were more or less endowed and could have better buildings and equipment. The schools in the middle west were entirely supported by the States. In consequence, they were less advanced in methods and had to get along with limited apparatus.

The Board of Trustees, which controlled the Iowa school, had given to it the high sounding name of "Iowa College for the Blind." However, with most people and even among those in Vinton where the school was located, it was generally spoken of as "the asylum." The superintendent and faculty strove to surround us with a normal and healthful atmosphere. It was explained to us and our parents that a blind child was just as much entitled to an education at public expense as his sighted brothers and sisters. It was then believed that such children must be taught quite differently from those with normal sight; as it was impossible to maintain such schools in all communities, it was only fair to provide free schools in some central place and free board and lodging during the school period. We never felt in any sense that we were in a charitable institution.

As I have related, mother left me and returned to the farm; but I have been told that the place was lonely without the little girl who had been so much care ever since her arrival. My parents lay awake nights talking it over, and finally decided to rent the farm and move to Vinton where they could be near me. Emma was teaching a fall term of school in the country and would later return to the State Normal, from which she would graduate in the spring. My sister Mary and her little girl had been with us for some time. Now that her husband Otis had joined her it was decided that after the corn was gathered the farm should be rented to them. Very soon my mother came back to Vinton and rented a small house. My father brought down a load of household goods and once more I had a real home. However, my school work so filled my days and evenings that it was agreed I should remain at the school through the week, spending the week-ends at home.

The next spring when Emma came home we moved into a larger house. During that summer vacation I was sent back to Cedar Falls to visit my sister Mary on the old farm. I enjoyed this but already the place seemed strange to me and had little attraction. I spent a few days in town with my old chum, Ida Robbins, and after about a month I was ready to return home. This time I left my birthplace never to return to it. That fall, sister Mary and her husband decided to leave the farm and go to Des Moines, the Capital of the State. This led my father to sell the farm, pay off the debt which had so long hung over him, and buy a small home in Vinton. This place was just four blocks from the school and I could go and come by myself. Here we lived very comfortably for several years. My father had taken up his old trade of carpentry. He had plenty of work, but the pay, according to our modern standard, was pitifully small. It seems incredible what I know to be a fact that he received only one dollar and fifty cents for a day's work, which extended from seven in the morning to six at night, with an hour off at noon. Soon he was taking contracts for small jobs which paid better. He was liked and trusted everywhere. The women

especially liked him for inside work for they said he was so clean and nice to have around. He never used tobacco or liquor in any form nor was he given to profanity.

Emma began teaching in the country near Vinton; she soon secured a position in the public schools of Belle Plain, a town some forty miles south of Vinton. After two years she was given a good position in the Vinton schools, steadily rising from grade teacher to principal of a building, and then as assistant in the high school. More comforts began coming into our home and I had the companionship of this dear sister. I could always find in her a sympathetic listener for all my school experiences.

Now to return to my school life in which I was completely absorbed. It was as if I had just begun to live. I could have gone much faster for it was like play for me to keep up with what was required. I have said that everything came easily to me--but there was one exception. I had very little musical ability. I took piano lessons all my eight years, even ventured some with the guitar, and took voice training in the choir. I had to work hard for all I got along this line. The music which I produced was decidedly mechanical and laborious; I understood the theory and could memorize anything; I liked harmony and counterpoint; I always managed somehow to hold my own with other students and progress from grade to grade--but I got very little pleasure out of it. I used to feel that the long hours spent in practise were wasted, and I doubt if in these more specialized days I would have been allowed to continue.

In later years I have been glad of all the time spent on music. I have been privileged to hear some of the world's best, and without that arduous training I never could have appreciated and enjoyed good music. One who has natural talent for music can often enjoy it without special training; not so the one who has no ear for music; but often he may be trained to appreciate music made by others even though he cannot produce it himself. I was obliged to see those who could not equal me in literary work surpass me in music--and perhaps this was good for me. It early

taught me that we are not all endowed with the same talents and that we should have respect and consideration for all.

My lack of musical talent was a great disappointment to my father. Fond of music and a fairly good singer himself, he had hoped that I might become a good musician. I do not think that anything I ever accomplished quite made up to him for this disappointment, and I felt this very keenly. It was for his sake and to maintain my own self-respect that I forced myself to continue my musical studies all those eight years, and to occasionally perform in public. No one will ever know what excruciating torture it was for me, for I knew only too well that my performances were perfunctory and mediocre.

After the first vacation I returned to school to enter the Intermediate grade under a sighted teacher, one Mrs. James of whom we were all very fond. Some of my classmates had been left behind and our class was much smaller. Several things of importance marked this year. We mostly roomed in groups of four with two large double beds. Among the older girls were four who were outstanding because of their ability and qualities of leadership. I had known Emma Magoon, Ena Cassels, Blanche Fearing and Nannie Duncan the previous year and admired them from a distance. Now it so happened that Nan was kept at home because of her mother's illness. As the students were mostly allowed to select their own roommates the three remaining girls cast about for a fourth to make up their group. For some reason they chose me, probably considered as the person least objectionable. Then they drew lots to see who would share the bed with me and it fell to Blanche. She confessed to me later how disappointed she was and how she envied Emma and Ena the good times they would have after the silence bell--whispering confidences. I had admired Blanche from our first meeting so I was delighted with the present arrangement.

I still clung to the hope of being a writer. I found that Blanche had the same ambition. She had already published one poem and as we confided our ambitions to each other and recited our verses, I felt

that I could never compare with Blanche for hers seemed to me the most beautiful I had ever heard. On the evening before I was fifteen I spent an hour alone in my room writing some verses which I called: "Dying Embers of Fourteen." After we had gone to bed I read these verses to Blanche and she praised them. In her I had found a real soul companion and from then on we were inseparable. It was my first real friendship on equal footing and my whole nature responded. Emma and Ena were both dear girls but Blanche and I were kindred spirits, and I shall have much to say of her later in these pages. She was three years my senior and three years ahead of me in school; Emma and Ena were four years beyond me; but they all treated me as an equal, and as everyone in the school looked up to them as leaders I enjoyed something of the same prestige.

It was during my second year that our Superintendent, Rev. Robert Caruthers, passed away and this brought about many changes in the school. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas McCune, the Principal, a single gentleman who married later. A scholarly man himself, he made our school, at least the upper grades, more like a college and treated us all as young ladies and gentlemen. Rev. Caruthers had been a rather strict disciplinarian, though in a fatherly sort of way.

The girls and boys were kept entirely apart--the girls occupied the north wing and the boys the south wing. We attended the same classes but we sat on opposite sides of the room. All conversation was strictly forbidden. However, listening to answers to roll call at chapel and hearing each other recite in classes led to acquaintance, and often clandestine meetings among the older students. One of the first bits of gossip I heard on entering school was of two couples who had run away, remaining out all night, and who had been promptly expelled.

Mr. McCune had a different theory. He believed that it was more normal for the two sexes to know each other, and that some contact supervised would tend to take away the glamour from the forbidden fruit. We were still not permitted to associate

during school hours, but there were frequent parties on holidays when the boys and girls mingled freely and got acquainted. He encouraged dancing, and on Saturday evenings the older students had a Literary Society at which time there was a half hour intermission for social recreation. This new arrangement worked very well. Many friendships were formed and a few marriages resulted.

As I look back it seems to me it could have been greatly improved. Our parties should have been better supervised so that we could have learned more of the niceties of life. There should have been games and other amusements for those who did not dance, instead of just strolling up and down the halls and verandas or sitting in the parlors engaging in rather inane conversations. Nevertheless, it broke up the monotony of social life and gave us much to talk about. I had little part in all this until my third year when I became a Third Junior and was therefore eligible and duly elected to the Literary Society. This meant that having gone home Friday afternoon I must return Saturday evening for Society.

As First Juniors we felt quite grown-up. We were no longer restricted to one class room under the same instructor, but recited to different teachers going to each in his or her class room. Outstanding among our instructors was Mr. George Tannehill, a blind man of commanding stature and a genius in mathematics. He guided us through higher arithmetic, algebra and geometry. We had no books nor did I ever use the metal slates common in some of our schools in those early days. Mr. Tannehill and his students solved all problems mentally and here I was in my element. At the beginning of this my third year Nan returned to school and naturally took her old place with Emma, Ena and Blanche. I conceded her claim without question being assured privately by the others, and especially by Blanche, that they should miss me.

So the years passed--for the most part on joyous wings. When I was a Second Junior, Emma and Ena graduated. Ena came from South Dakota where there was at that time no school for the blind. Her

father being in good circumstances paid for her tuition. She always dressed well and had plenty of money to spend, with which she was most generous. After leaving school that spring Ena never returned. We corresponded for a while. She married a man with sight and gradually drifted out of our lives, and I never heard from her again. Emma was a fine musician and returned the next year to take a post-graduate course in music. Once more I was to room with my former friends--Emma, Nan and Blanche.

This was Blanche's last year. She was full of ambitions both for herself and her companions, and initiated many schemes which she carried through successfully. One is worthy of mention. She proposed that a few of us put on a play. At that time, except for our Literary Society with an occasional old-fashioned dialogue, we had no training in dramatics. Finally, we obtained the consent of the Superintendent and a play, "East Lynn," was selected. The head teacher agreed to train us. We four girls and four boys who were our special friends made up the cast. The part of "Sir Archibald" was taken by a bachelor teacher who had partial sight. Blanche was "Lady Isabel" and I was "Barbara Hare," the second wife. We even made up an orchestra among us to play between acts under the guidance of our Music Director, Professor T. S. Slaughter, who was blind. The whole matter was kept a profound secret from the rest of the school. It was lots of fun stealing away evenings to some basement room for rehearsals.

The date fixed for the play was March 25th. It had been advertised in the local papers as a free performance and we hoped for a good crowd from outside. We had to depend largely on country people for our audience. Imagine our dismay when the day arrived--dark and threatening; soon it began to rain and settled down to a steady downpour which lasted all day, turning the roads into streams of mud. Well do I remember coming out of class in the middle of the forenoon and standing by the hall window, disconsolately listening to the steady drip, drip of the rain outside. Here I was joined by Professor Slaughter who was in our confidence. He pretended to laugh at

my discomfiture, but secretly I felt sure he shared my anxiety.

We eight student performers represented a faction in the school accused by the other side as "wanting to shine." So this night meant more than a public success; it meant a triumph for our side. We had many well-wishers among the students as well as some who felt otherwise. By this time it was known throughout the school that we were giving a play--but just who was in it was still a mystery. Toward evening the skies cleared. By eight o'clock the concert hall was filled. Everything went off beautifully, at least so far as the audience could judge. The town papers were generous in their priase; some said they had seen the play several times, but never better played. We felt quite well satisfied and repaid for all our hard work. Now years later, dramatics are being encouraged in all schools for the blind, but at that time such a thing was new and not even we recognized its potentialities. The members of the other faction in the school were rather silent, as we expected, but gradually their animosity which had kindled from nothing died out and was never revived.

It was customary in our Literary Society to select someone to give a farewell address to the graduates, and that spring I was chosen for the purpose. I wrote a poem for the occasion which won me many compliments; although there were some who hinted that Blanche had written it for me. All too soon June arrived and graduation. Blanche gave the valedictory for her class and her school days were ended. Our parting was a real tragedy in our young lives. She was going out into that mysterious world of which we had thought and talked so much. She had such high hopes and mine for her were even higher. We vowed eternal friendship and planned to write every other week, in New York Point, of course. How we blessed those magic dots which made it possible for us to tell each other just what was in our hearts without having it read by a third party! Let me say here that we kept up this correspondence as planned as long as we both lived.

I felt that much of the joy of life had gone with Blanche--but the next fall found me back at school with three years still ahead of me. Because of her year's absence Nan had dropped back one grade and she and I were now the only girls left of the old gang. We took in two other girls as roommates and life went on as usual. Of course, I had other friends in my class and among the younger students. These friendships grew and filled my life, but none ever quite took the place which Blanche had held. I had her letters to comfort me and once in the middle of that year she returned for a brief visit. She had cut off her soft, light brown hair and sold it to pay the expense of that trip, for she was determined to be self-supporting.

The last week of school was quite an occasion. There were the closing exams which were no trial to me. On Monday evening was held the graduating exercises which in my day consisted of essays and music, all furnished by members of the class. The valedictory and salutatory were given by members chosen by the class and were supposed to go to the students standing first and second in their school work. On Tuesday afternoon occurred the literary and musical contests open only to those in the senior grades. In the evening there was a lecture by some out-of-town celebrity. On Wednesday evening was the closing concert under the direction of the Supervisor of Music. All these exercises were open to the public and were well attended. Commencement week was also a time for reunions when old students were welcomed back and many friendships renewed. As long as I remained in school Blanche returned for these reunions.

After the closing concert many of the students took the night trains for their homes, and for them and all others there was a midnight lunch. I always remained for these midnight farewells after which those who planned to leave by trains in the morning caught a few hours sleep. I can still recall vividly those midnight suppers, the delightful confusion, the hurrying to and fro, and the sound of trunks being trundled through the halls. I can still feel and smell

the cool June night air as we lingered on the veranda or by an open window for those last farewells. When those of us who were left finally went to our rooms--how empty the place seemed! Then it was that I envied those who were going away on trains. It seemed so much more exciting than just walking a few blocks home.

For the first few days at home I slept a lot, making up for those short hours and excitement of the last week. The summer was spent rather aimlessly. I helped a little about the house, read some and went to church socials, etc., etc. Always there were the letters from my schoolmates and the sound of the old school bell which rang occasionally, but not as during school days. In August I began to count the days till I would be back at school with my companions and studies.

When Nan graduated a year after Blanche she was employed as one of the piano teachers. The next two years I had as one of my roommates Z. Adel Rhone, a member of my class. She was a girl of considerable talent, but of a jealous and moody disposition which frequently got her into trouble. I had often tried to win her confidence and thought if I could live intimately with her I could succeed, and here was my opportunity. But alas, it did not work out that way! She was temperamental as ever. For a time she would be gay and friendly, then without any apparent cause she would become moody and silent, not speaking to anyone for days together. Since coming to the school an operation had given her considerable sight, not enough to read, but sufficient to enable her to get around nicely. She was a hard worker, especially in music. Often she was up early and with the sound of the rising bell we could hear her practising. Ida McCune (no relative of Superintendent McCune), who was also a member of my class, and Eva Whitcomb from a lower grade, made up our "quartette." We four remained together the rest of my school life.

After leaving school Blanche had published several poems, and two years later appeared her first book entitled, "The Sleeping World and Other Poems." This little book was favorably received by

the critics and eminent writers of the day. It was a proud day for me when I held that little volume in my hand--a complimentary copy. Professor McCune was much impressed and urged Blanche to go out and solicit orders for it. With her youth and pleasing personality (she was a very pretty girl), she could no doubt have made it a financial success, but she refused to consider it. To her it would have been trading on her handicap--which she would not do. So far as it was possible she concealed her lack of sight and few of those who read her books ever guessed that she was blind.

To return to my own school life. I had many friends and the years passed all too soon. In music I still plodded along receiving fairly good marks, due I suspect more to the kindness of my teachers than to my actual accomplishments. I think they figured that it would not look well for a student who stood first in everything else, and who really worked hard, to be flunked in music; so they let me continue. I came to play rather difficult pieces, but I always knew that my performances were entirely mechanical and I took no pleasure nor pride in them.

I suffered from one handicap which no one guessed for I doubt if I could have explained it so as to make any one understand. To appear in public was excruciating agony. This even extended to reciting in the class room. Yet I forced myself to do all the things required of me--but it took all my will-power. To stand up on the stage, or sit at the piano and play, was torture beyond what any one can imagine. This physical torment left me weak and cold, feeling that I must faint or fall if I did not hold on to something or somebody. Under these conditions I could never do my best and could take no pleasure in "showing off." This handicap has persisted in a lesser degree all my life and no amount of experience ever quite overcame it.

I have tried to analyze this feeling which cast a shadow over everything I tried to do. Was it purely physical, over self-consciousness, or a lack of confidence? What was it? Perhaps if I had gone to some of my teachers in those early days and made

them understand, they might have been wise enough to help me. Evidently I did not show what torture I was enduring and came through with a fair performance. And so I continued to suffer in silence--and only I knew how much better I might have done if I had not had to concentrate all my strength on just going through with it. Perhaps I deserved some credit for persevering and making as good a showing as I did under these circumstances.

At school we had our little romances, our boy friends with whom we spent the time at parties and Saturday night intermission. I had several of these but the one I liked best was Frank Motz, a member of my class. He was a rare character, no great scholar, but a real genius in music. Every one liked Frank and we spent many happy hours together. Three short years after leaving school he died, but I still treasure his memory and count it a privilege to have known intimately such a rare, sweet soul.

I trust that I have not given the impression that I was always a model student. The solemn, grave faced little girl who entered school soon became a very natural fun-loving child. While I never did anything startling, still I was in on several doubtful undertakings. I recall several stolen trips to the cellar for raw turnips and apples--and didn't they taste good! During my first year I received five black marks or demerits for talking after the silence bell. These appeared on my quarterly report. My parents were shocked but my father consoled me by saying that if I never did anything worse he would be satisfied. I was never guilty of stolen trysts with the boys which I felt was going just a little too far, but I had no compunctions against talking to them when an opportunity came my way. It always seemed as if whenever I did go astray I was found out, and if in a crowd I was singled out as the guilty one.

One morning we went to our first class and our teacher, Mr. Tannehill, who lived down town, failed to show up. Naturally the girls and boys began talking. Some of the girls were over on the boys' side. Two boys were over by my seat showing me a very beautiful watch, a gift to one of them from his father.

I had the watch in my hand when the door opened and Professor McCune walked in. "Class is dismissed," he said curtly, and then passing by all the others who were out of their seats, he spoke directly to me: "Miss Hoyt, this is not business." I walked out of the room, not realizing till far down the hall that I was still holding the watch in my hand. Then came the problem of how to return the watch to its owner. It seems now that it would have been a simple matter to take it to the office and ask that it be returned, but no such thing seemed possible at that time. Some of my girl friends played in the orchestra and right behind them sat some boys whom we could trust. I prevailed on one of the girls to pass the watch back surreptitiously; this was done and the incident closed. By the way, notes were often passed back and forth in like manner.

Professor Slaughter, our Music Director, was a great favorite of ours and we were always trying to play jokes on him. One winter day, armed with plenty of fresh snow, Ena, Blanche and I stole into his music room in the recess just before dinner. Catching him unawares we began stuffing the snow down his neck. He naturally turned upon us and while the others tusseled with him, I went for more snow. Out through the window on to the veranda I went, but all the snow had vanished from the railings, so I rushed down to the back yard. At the foot of the steps my feet slipped from under me and down I went on my back. The dinner bell rang but I did not hear it. The next thing I knew I was lying on my bed with the nurse and matron bending over me. One of the workmen who saw me fall had picked me up and carried me to my room. The Superintendent was very solicitous for it was feared that my back was injured. Mother and the doctor were summoned but it proved not to be serious. A day or two in bed with extra attention which I enjoyed and I was back to normal.

During Blanche's last year, one of the teachers offered to conduct a special class in literature between supper and chapel. Always eager to learn all we could along this line, Blanche and I joined the group. One evening in early spring we had come up

from supper, gone out the back door and wandered down to the back gate. Then a spirit of adventure seized us. I was always able to orient myself pretty well and I knew that if we followed the fence along the north side of the grounds, we would come in due time to the north-east corner. What lay between was the lure which beckoned us on.

We found no high adventure, just a tangle of low branches and thorny shrubs through which we fought our way, finally reaching the stone wall which bordered the front of the grounds. A short distance brought us to the driveway which ran in a semicircle up to the veranda, fronting the north wing. I was now on familiar ground as this was the way I took to go home week-ends. We sat down at the end of the stone wall and reveled in the peace of that lovely spring evening. We listened to the soft twilight music of the birds and felt the sweet spring air all about us. Is it any wonder that when the bell rang for our evening class we did not heed it? Just then nothing seemed important but to get away from all restraint.

Professor McCune had devised a system of bell calls for each student and employee. As we sat there with guilty consciences but happy, our two calls rang out on the evening air. We clasped hands but sat silent. When we thought it was about time for chapel, we meandered up the driveway and slipped demurely into our seats. As we came out an irate teacher pounced upon us and demanded an explanation. "We were so sorry! We had gone out for a little walk and must have been too far away to hear the bell." I think she knew we were lying but thought best to drop the matter. We had our little escapade and felt the better for it. How the writing of these episodes brings back a flood of pleasant memories! I can still hear that old bell to which on most occasions I responded with alacrity.

We lacked the equipment of modern days. There was no electricity. Kerosene lamps lighted the halls and teachers' rooms, and hand lamps were carried about as needed. There were no telephones, although in my last year one was installed in the office. Yet I believe that our school laid the foundation

of an elementary education as good as any in the land, perhaps better than some. What our instructors lacked in equipment they made up in resourcefulness. I remember when we were studying astronomy our teacher took us out on the lawn one bright spring morning. There were just nine of us and setting one boy in the center as the sun the rest, representing the eight planets, revolved around him. I do not know what would have happened if the two additional planets discovered since then had been known at that time; but I have no doubt some way would have been found. Since those days the Iowa School (no longer known as College) has been modernized. It now has electric lights, telephones, a well-equipped gymnasium and all the modern conveniences.

In these modern days there are some among our educators of the blind who look with disfavor on the residential school. They would encourage parents to send their blind children to the public school, especially where there are Sight-Saving Classes. They claim that to segregate blind children is abnormal and unfits them for later life among the sighted. I cannot agree. My personal experience and observation all points to quite the opposite. I believe that a blind child needs special care and training which can only be given by experts trained for the purpose. They also need companionship and competition on equal grounds which they cannot find among sighted children.

Everywhere in the sighted world we are faced with a lack of true appreciation. We are either underrated or overrated; either we are considered mentally inferior or prodigies; rarely indeed is one's true value recognized. A blind child cannot understand all this and if thrown among sighted children he may suffer from neglect or what may be even worse, from overpraise. When he reaches the high school age, and certainly if he enters college, he is ready to mingle with sighted companions. He has learned his disability and how to overcome it, and is ready to compete as nearly as he ever will with those who can see.

In a residential school for the blind I laid the foundation of my education, character and habits. When I went out into the world of the seeing I felt like any other young person looking for his place and his work. I have always mingled freely with the blind and have done all I could to advance their cause. At the same time I have had hosts of good friends among the sighted and have led a normal life among them. In fact, I have always thought that in the school where I passed my early years all types of people that I have known since were represented.

And now I come to the last year of my school life. Our class still numbered nine as it had for the past few years. Of the boys there were: James Muirhead, a very find young Scotchman, who had been my rival in class during all these years; Jim Yount, a short good-natured Dutchman, who managed just to get by in his school work; and Frank Motz, of whom I have already spoken. Among the six girls were: Del Rhone whom I have already described; Ida McCune of whom I was very fond; Nellie Van Hooser, somewhat crippled, but gifted in music; Phala Hinkley who had already shown considerable business ability; and Georgia Griffiths, a girl with partial sight.

And now it was June again and we were holding class meetings preparing our commencement program. After some good-natured discussion, I was chosen to give the valedictory and Jim Muirhead the salutatory. At this Del immediately took exception. She said no one questioned my right to first place, but she should have had second honors. In point of hard work and general accomplishments I think she was right, but the class thought otherwise. Del lapsed into one of her silent moods and remained so through most of the days that followed.

During that closing week my family gave my class a party one evening at my home. We relaxed, sat around and ate ice cream and cake, and when I rather weakly attempted to arrange for necessary class meetings, they rebelled and refused to listen. Blanche arrived along with other old students for commencement week. On Sunday afternoon she

delivered an inspiring address before the student body. My Aunt Adelia came on from Wisconsin for the occasion.

Graduation was on Monday evening, June 17, 1887--a hot June night. The auditorium was crowded and the air heavy with the scent of roses and other flowers. Shall I ever forget it! Jim gave his salutatory and each one followed with an original oration, interspersed with music. Georgie and Jim played a piano duet. Frank had an original composition for which I had written the words; Del sang the solo part, Frank played the violin obbligato, and I the piano accompaniment. Then came the time for the valedictory, "Brought to the Test." As usual, it was torture to me and I trembled so I could scarcely stand; but somehow I got through, closing with a farewell to the faculty and to my classmates. The class song followed--with music by Nellie and words by me.

Then an incident happened which is worthy of mention. While we still stood to receive our diplomas there came a little surprise. Superintendent McCune stepped forward and told how a good many years before there had come to the school a little boy afflicted mentally. Some of the boys had been most unkind to him--but one had befriended him. The child did not remain long in the school--nor for that matter in the world of the living. However, his mother had not forgotten the kindness shown her little son by the boy, now a young man about to graduate as a fine musician. She desired to show her appreciation. At this point he presented Frank with a beautiful and expensive violin. I was just as proud and pleased as if the honor had come to me and I am sure we all felt the same way.

The next day came the literary and musical contests. I had foolishly written another essay for this occasion instead of concentrating on one, as Del had done. She carried off the first prize in the literary contest and I came in for second prize. She also won the prize for piano playing while I scored nothing at all in this contest, although I competed. Blanche and my other friends were naturally disappointed, but somehow I never took these things

seriously. So it was that with sincerity I congratulated Del and wished her every success.

After the concert the next evening we said our farewells and my school days were over. In later years I met many of my schoolmates again and again at reunions at the dear old I. C. B. Some I entertained in my own home. Del married and died in a few years; so did Nellie and Ida; Frank lived but three years; Jim too has recently passed away. Of the rest I know nothing but doubt if they are still living.

In recalling this period of my life, I wonder if I have even touched the high spots. It had so much in it for me--so much that I have not told. After more than fifty years, I still walk in fancy through those long halls and on the verandas. I can still hear the sound of the old bell and the voices of the dear friends now so long silent. These are memories to cherish. I could only wish for every boy and girl who leave our modern schools for the blind as helpful experiences as I had at the I.C.B., and as pleasant memories which I have of my school days.

INTERLUDE

In the days and months that followed my graduation I wished more than ever that my home was somewhere else than in Vinton. To be within sound of the old school bell, even to go there as I had often done during vacations on the excuse of practising on the piano, and yet to know that I was no longer a part of the school life was for a long time something hard to bear. I helped mother with various household tasks and she needed help for she was not very well. For a long time I really enjoyed the sense of freedom. I felt that I could plan my work and do more of the things I wanted to do. I was not one of those who left school with any great ambition. While like most normal young people I had my dreams of accomplishing great things, yet I was exceedingly practical. I knew my limitations--perhaps I even exaggerated them.

Professor McCune suggested that it would be very nice for me to go to the Iowa State University. He believed that I could hold my own there with sighted students, something which in those days was not so common as now. How my soul longed for such an opportunity--but I knew it would take more money than my people could afford--so I never admitted how much I wanted to go. I believe if I had urged the matter, my sister Emma would have stood by me and the sacrifice would have been made. But who was I to demand such a thing of my family? What guarantee had I that I could ever pay back the amount required to put me through college? So I never showed by word or act how I longed for such an opportunity. I have often wondered if this was the first of many mistakes. I had not the slightest doubt of my ability to do the work and I was still thirsty for more knowledge. Had I gone through the Iowa State University it might have changed my entire life--and would it have been for the better? I wonder!

I had been reared in a Christian home. I do not remember the time when I did not believe in the Bible as the inspired Word of God and in Jesus Christ, His Son, as my personal Savior. In childhood I had made public profession of my faith, but my parents did not think me old enough to join the church. It was not until I was sixteen and a student at the I. C. B., that I was baptized into the fellowship of the Baptist Church. After this I took part in all the religious activities of the school, leading prayer meetings and testifying at every opportunity. Now that I was home to stay, I began taking a more active part in the work of the church. I taught a class of little girls in the Sunday School and was President of the Young People's Society. I also mingled more in the social life of the community, having been duly elected a member of the Women's Literary Circle.

In that fall of 1887 Blanche urged me to visit her in Davenport, Iowa. As my parents were going back to Janesville, Wisconsin, on a short visit and I could go part of the way with them, it was so arranged. Those were two very happy weeks I spent with my dear friend, her mother and sister. It was October and we were much out-of-doors. Blanche had written me of a wonderful new machine, a typewriter, on which she could write her compositions. I too had literary aspirations--but how to get my thoughts on paper? During my visit I learned to use this new machine and found it most fascinating; but its cost was considerable and it was many a day before I had a typewriter of my own.

Blanche was taking Latin and German under private tutors and this fired my own ambition. She loaned me some of her Latin books and I returned home full of many plans. My father gladly undertook to teach me what he knew of Latin, but I soon outdistanced him and he became little more than my reader. That winter I attended the Latin class at our high school where I won the respect of teachers and pupils. Sickness cut short my attendance at school but I continued my studies at home. My sister and I took a correspondence course in German. A well educated German neighbor used to read to me. I read

all the books there were in embossed type and they were few. Emma was taking the Chatauqua Literary and Scientific course and we read the books together. It never occurred to us to have me fill out the required papers as she did and receive a certificate.

This was all very well and good, but there was the need for earning money. Besides, was not that the real test of what most people called success? The opportunity came to give music lessons. Four little girls came to me, and while I knew I was no musician, I taught them conscientiously and they made creditable progress. But I had no heart for this work.

Through Blanche I was finally able to secure a World Typewriter, a small machine designed only for writing with capital letters. This was a great joy to me for at last I could put my thoughts down on paper. We had built an addition to our house consisting of a parlor and large airy room above it. Emma had furnished the latter for her and me and here I spent all my spare time writing. My first manuscript--a story--was promptly returned when I submitted it to a publisher. A poem which I wrote and sent to Blanche for criticism, and which she forwarded to a friend connected with the "Boston Leader," appeared in that paper and was rather widely copied. Later the same paper accepted a short story and paid me a small amount for it.

A blind piano tuner, a graduate of the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston, came to teach in the Iowa School. From him I learned of an ink print magazine called "The Mentor," which had just been started by one Joel W. Smith, a blind teacher at the Boston School. The problems of the blind had weighed heavily on my mind even before I left school. However, I felt that I should solve my own problems before attempting to give advice to others. Nevertheless, I subscribed to "The Mentor" and later sent in notes regarding some of our graduates. These were published and the editor, Mr. Smith, wrote me such a cordial and encouraging letter that I became a regular contributor. Boston seemed such a long way off and to me it was the mecca of the literary world.

Even this little contact was an inspiration. To Mr. Smith I owe an everlasting debt of gratitude--for his letters and encouragement came to me at a time when I most needed just such a stimulant. Through him and his magazine I learned much of the work for the blind, not only in this country but abroad, and deeper grew my interest.

The I. C. B. Alumni had formed a state organization in which I took an active part. One of our first undertakings was the establishment of an Industrial Home for the Blind. I was made a member of a committee along with Miss Lorana Mattice and another blind lady, and in the spring of 1890 we were sent to Des Moines to present our cause to the legislature. There I spent two or three weeks, staying with my sister Mary, who with her husband and little girl had some years before moved to Des Moines. Most of the days were spent at the Capitol. This was a great experience for me--and my first real glimpse of a city and the workings of a legislative body. Our efforts were crowned with success. The Home was established and Miss Mattice was appointed one of the trustees.

The following year when it became necessary for her to be absent on business for the Home, Miss Mattice asked me to take her place in the class room. I had three weeks of teaching which I greatly enjoyed, although it took a heavy toll on my physical strength for I slept and ate but little during all those weeks. Gladly then would I have accepted a position as teacher in the school, but none was forthcoming even though my work was praised by teachers and pupils. This was another disappointment, but one of those things which perhaps is foreordained to fit the general pattern of our lives.

Meantime, my parents had visited my sister in Des Moines and Emma and I had gone there on the occasion of the State Fair. Gradually we all felt the pull of the city. Matters finally came to a head when Emma secured a much better position as Principal of the High School in Missouri Valley, a small town in the western part of the state. Now there was nothing to keep us in Vinton and we decided to move to

Des Moines. In the spring mother, father and I went to Des Moines and stayed with sister Mary while father superintended the building of our new home. A lot had been purchased in University Place, a suburb in northwest Des Moines. This lot fronted on the campus of Drake University. When school closed Emma joined us and we all remained in Des Moines until midsummer when we returned to Vinton to pack and make ready to move.

It was after all quite a break for we had many good friends in Vinton and they crowded around us--regretting our departure. For me there were no regrets. I was thrilled at the thought of the new life opening up to me. I heard my mother tell someone that they were going largely on my account, believing that I might have better opportunities in the city. A farewell church social was held at our home to which all our friends came. Having rented the house we were ready to leave. The day arrived when a friend from the country came with his wagons and teams and conveyed our household goods to the station for shipment. Early in September of 1892 Emma departed for her new teaching position and we for our new but unfinished home in Des Moines.

When I visited Blanche that fall (1887) I found her much interested in Christian Science, and for a time it intrigued me. However, we both soon found it inadequate as a religion and dropped it. Blanche went on to other cults, social and religious, and as we shared each other's thoughts I became interested in them also. Blanche recommended many books to me some of which I read, such as "Robert Ellsmere," "Comparative Religion," and others. These made very little impression on me for I felt the lack of spirituality in all of them. In the end I came back to my simple faith in which I have remained ever since. Not so with Blanche. The closing years of the nineteenth century found many of our scholars and writers turning to socialism, evolution and higher criticism, the latter the forerunner of modernism. Blanche was caught up in this new trend and swept along with it. This seemed to make little difference in our friendship for as she said: "We love the same things but

call them by different names." I could not see it just that way--but argument was useless.

Suddenly Blanche astonished every one by announcing her determination to go to Chicago and enter Northwestern University as a law student. In those days a woman lawyer was something of a curiosity and for a blind girl to aspire to such a career seemed sheer madness. All her friends expostulated with her and I confess that I joined with them. But Blanche was adamant! She claimed that if she was to be a writer she needed a broader experience. Accompanied by her devoted mother she went to Chicago, entered the University and the year we moved to Des Moines she graduated with honors. During her student life she had several long poems published and her second book appeared, "In the City by the Lake," containing two short stories in blank verse.

Five years had now passed since I left school. They had not been altogether unhappy and I had kept busy--but I had a feeling of frustration. I had gained much in experience and in social intercourse. My interest in work for the blind had steadily grown until it almost became an obsession. There had been many heartaches and times of deep depression for I seemed so far from accomplishing anything worth while. Now perhaps I would find in my new environment the opportunity for which I had been waiting.

TWENTY YEARS IN DES MOINES, IOWA

Did you ever move into an unfinished house? Well, it is most inconvenient, but to a young enthusiast it was exciting and a lot of fun. Some of the rooms were finished, others were not, and father would do this work at his leisure. The house was larger than any we had lived in before, and mother was not at all well. She did most of the cooking but the house cleaning was left largely to me. I missed my sister Emma very much, but her letters were something to look forward to and they were delivered by a postman, a new experience in our lives. Then there were the trolley cars which passed our side door and seemed to bring the great world right to us.

Our house was on a corner with large oak trees left from the original forest overshadowing it. My parents occupied a large bedroom on the ground floor, just off the big, sunny sitting room. My room was just over my parents, and on those autumn nights I would sit long at my window listening to the sounds of the new world around me. Just across the street was the campus of Drake University. Some nights groups of students would gather under the trees almost beneath my window, and eavesdropping I would imagine all sorts of things about them.

Sister Mary lived on the other side of town but we visited back and forth frequently. Her daughter, Nettie, the little girl of whom I have spoken often in this narrative, had now finished high school and was teaching. Christmas brought Emma home and how good it was to have her there and to show her our new house, now about completed! Sister Mary's family and ours spent Christmas and New-year together and how we did enjoy it!

We had at once placed our letters with the Baptist Church which was down in the city, reached by the street cars. University Place where we lived was quite a thriving suburb centered around Drake University, founded and maintained by the Disciples

of Christ, better known as the Christian Denomination. The church of that faith was large and attended by most of the inhabitants of University Place. Although we were not members of that church, we were made welcome and came to feel quite at home among them.

Here again would have seemed a splendid opportunity for me to continue my studies at the University, but that would have taken money of which we had all too little just then. Besides, I was becoming more and more needed at home, but still found time for some outside interests. My first friend among the young people was Stella Carson, a neighbor girl who taught in the public school. She called on me and invited me to join a Chatauqua Circle which met once a week at the University and was under the leadership of one of the professors. I gladly accepted--and there I met others who became my lifelong friends.

Two other young women, Jessie Sankey and Minnie Sherman (the latter of the famous Sherman family), soon made my acquaintance. They were both teachers and belonged to our church, although they lived in University Place. Often I went with them to church in the evenings and was soon invited to join the I. N. Club (Inter Nos). The girls of this club were mostly from our church and met once in two weeks at the homes of the members for study and fun. This gave me another outlet and a variety of contacts.

The Columbia Exposition, known as the World's Fair, occurred in 1893 in Chicago. Sister Mary, daughter Nettie and Emma all planned to attend that summer. Blanche had invited me to come and stay with her but it was quite out of the question. She was now practising law and was assisted by her sister who had become a Court Reporter. Blanche had been appointed by Mrs. Potter Palmer on a very important committee connected with the Women's Department of the Fair. On the very day on which she was to speak at this meeting, I was engaged in washing paint from the outside of our windows, the new house having just received its first coat of paint. The contrast in our lives struck me forcibly but there was no bitterness in my heart. To me Blanche was a

superior being and richly deserved any and all honors which could come to her, and I was sure of her love and understanding. We had kept up the practise begun when she left school of writing to each other every other week--and oh, what a joy and inspiration it had been!

Literature was still my chief ambition. I had kept up quite a regular correspondence with Joel W. Smith, blind editor of "The Mentor," and had contributed a number of articles to the magazine. I longed to express in some new and telling way the problems of the blind which began to weigh more and more heavily on my heart. So one day I sat down and wrote out the first chapter of a story depicting the ambitions, struggles and heart-breaking experiences of a blind girl just out of school. I called it "After Graduation." I sent it to Mr. Smith to get his reaction. Imagine my surprise when I received the January number of "The Mentor" to find my first chapter already in print. Along with it came a letter from the editor praising my effort and asking me to have the next installment ready in time for the February number. I was thrilled and a little frightened!

The story ran for six months. Each installment reached the magazine in time and was written with little real knowledge of what the next chapter was to be. It seemed as if the story just wrote itself and rarely with any revision. Some of the incidents were drawn from my own experience, but more from those of my school friends who had confided in me. The original of Miss Lane, the teacher whom I rather glorified in the story, was of course Miss Lorana Mattice, my blind friend and first teacher. I closed the story with the sixth chapter, greatly to the regret of many. Words of praise and commendation came to me from the limited circle wherein the magazine was read. At my old school, Professor McCune read the story aloud to the students and when in that spring, 1895, Emma and I returned to Vinton for Commencement and the Grand Reunion, I received quite an ovation and was hailed as a promising author.

"After Graduation" was not my only literary venture. I had by this time contributed several short

stories, mostly for young people, to the Chicago Standard (our Baptist Denominational Paper) and some had received special mention from the editor. One of the stories was copied, without my knowledge, in a Des Moines paper and brought me considerable local publicity. Ellen Glaspell, the well known author, was at that very time a student at Drake University. I heard her read one of her earliest short stories before the Literary Society there. Shortly after I was invited to read one of mine before the same group. For this occasion I wrote "Jim's Bouquet," a story advocating equal rights for men and women. Of course, my friends thought mine the better of the two--but alas!--Time has rendered its inevitable and just verdict! Miss Glaspell became a well known writer while I am unknown--except to a circumscribed few. "Jim's Bouquet" was later published in the Woman's Journal and was the first one of my literary ventures to bring me any financial return.

I earned money in a variety of ways. As soon as our house was finished we rented two of our upstairs rooms to students, and for caring for the rooms I received part of the rent. For some months I took care of a little girl a few hours each day while her parents were attending classes at Drake. I coached some high school students in mathematics and one girl in Latin, reading Cicero. I helped one dear lady who in early life failed to obtain much education, and who now in better circumstances aspired to hold her own in a woman's club. I assisted her in preparing her papers, which practically meant writing them for her, and for this she was glad to pay me well. One winter I conducted a small study club for just such women and each paid a small fee for the course. I also caned chairs for a local furniture store. I had learned this trade at school and found it useful in repairing our own chairs. Always eager to improve myself mentally, I welcomed an invitation to join a very exclusive club at Drake, the membership consisting mostly of the wives of the professors. Its membership was limited to twenty-five. All this helped and gave me a variety of occupations and interests.

It was about this time that I renewed my acquaintance with Hattie Rowell. Because she later played such an important part in my life I wish to devote a few lines to her here and now. I first met her some years before when I was visiting at my sister Mary's. Hattie was a young girl then whose parents lived in the country; and she was boarding with my sister and attending high school. I believe we were mutually attracted to each other. After we moved to Des Moines, the Rowell's decided to leave the farm and build a house in University Place. This they did and again Hattie and I were thrown together and our liking increased to a lifelong friendship. Although ten years my junior and differing in many ways yet we found much in common, and I was able to help Hattie with her school work while in return she gave me many pleasant hours in going places. There were also Jennie Hancher, Alice Allison and the Grinelle girls, Gene and Julia; with these and a few others we formed a little group of congenial souls.

Hattie soon had a young man attending her. This was Ira J. Hoff, a teacher of Penmanship at Drake. She brought him to see me and in course of time they became engaged. Hattie was generous in this as in all else and willingly shared her young man's time with me--and soon Ira too was among my lifelong friends. We had much in common. We both loved books and the great out-of-doors! We three walked and drove together and spent long summer days in the woods where I learned to know birds and flowers as never before. In winter we attended lectures at Drake or more frequently spent a quiet evening at my home reading some new or favorite book. In this way we enjoyed "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush" and "The Doctor's Story," by Ian MacLaren; and other books new in those days. With the other girls of our crowd we sometimes had all day excursions and picnics in the country, or we filled the Rowell "Surrey" and took long country rides. Sometimes there were other young men along or trailing on their bicycles. I believe Ira was happiest when he was the only man in the crowd of girls--at least he was always at home on such occasions.

Jennie Hancher was another grand friend and we had many lovely walks together; and rides too in her one-seated buggy behind her gentle little horse, who sometimes balked. But more often Hattie, Ira and I formed a happy trio -- taking long delightful rides in Ira's one-seated buggy. Next to my school days these were the happiest years of my life. But why try to make comparisons? The years brought many changes and each brought new experiences -- and so life continued to unfold and grow broader and richer. This was the heyday of my youth, if a bit late, and I enjoyed it to the full. These were not transient acquaintances; each became a lifelong friend and each added something to the sum of my life's fullness -- something I should have missed without them. I only hope that I gave them as much in return.

This seems a good time to say something more about my oldest half-sister, Clara Anet (Nettie to us) and her family. She was married when I was about two years old to my father's half-brother, Frank Hoyt. They went to live on a farm near Sac City in Western Iowa. During my school days, Emma and I spent a month one summer visiting them. They had two children, Carrie May just four years my junior, and Fred C. two years younger than his sister. They always liked to refer to me as their "aunty-cousin," because of the double relationship. After we moved to Des Moines they came to see us more frequently -- nearly every year at State Fair time.

After Carrie was married they sometimes brought with them little Ruth, Carrie's oldest child. She seemed to take a great liking to me and would follow me about like my shadow. In later years we corresponded and her letters were a great comfort to me. When Frank and Nettie decided to leave the farm and move into town, my father went out to Sac City and helped his brother build a house. Father, after a fall from a cherry tree in 1895, was no longer able to follow his trade as a carpenter, but he continued to be my helper and guide and reader, and was always ready to do anything he could for me.

It was between Christmas and New Year of 1897 that Hattie and Ira were married. In the previous

September Ira had gone to a small college in Missouri to teach and it was there after the holiday vacation that he returned with his bride. Unfortunately for them the school failed and in the spring they returned to Des Moines. In the following fall Ira secured a position in a business college in Warren, Pennsylvania, and this time they left Des Moines for good. It was hard to see them go, but I knew it was inevitable and I was happy in their happiness. This was the first break in our little circle of friends. The others tried to make it up to me but no one could quite take the place of those loyal friends.

The year 1898 was memorable for the Spanish-American War and there was great excitement. Although we had a part in it and one heard of the Sinking of the Maine, San Juan Hill, the Battle of Manila Bay, Teddy Roosevelt and His Rough Riders -- yet it all seemed so far away and scarcely touched the life of the average citizen in the middle west. Having lived through the First and Second World Wars, those days seem now tame indeed.

That same year (1898) came the wedding of Julia Grinelle, followed soon after by Gene's marriage. Both married Drake graduates and went away to live. I attended both weddings and helped to make merry although each left me feeling more and more alone. Jennie Hancher came next to Hattie in my affections. We had many good times together, but she too became engaged to a young minister, a graduate of the Bible Department at Drake. In August 1900 Jennie and Bert Titus were married. The wedding took place in the morning of a hot summer day.

When I returned home from that wedding I found sad news awaiting me. Blanche Fearing had passed away. I knew she had been ill for a year or more. The body she had driven by the force of an indomitable will had finally rebelled, and no medical skill could repair the damage wrought. Besides the two books already mentioned, she had published a novel, "Roberta," and a small book in verse, "The Island Lily." While critics praised her work for its literary quality, yet her socialistic ideas and frank realism was far in advance of her time, and so her

books were not very popular and had only a limited reading. Her death and the loss of so many of my companions left me feeling rather low in spirits. However, I had little time for brooding.

More and more I was obliged to take over the household cares as my mother was becoming less and less able to assume them. In the autumn of 1901 she had a long illness and we thought the end was near. Sister Mary was with us much of the time and she was always a tower of strength on which we leaned heavily. In December sister Emma came home having secured a substitute to take over her school work. My oldest sister came down from Sac City. Then mother took a change for the better and slowly, very slowly, she came back to us to remain for five more years, but never as an active member of the household. After Christmas Emma reluctantly returned to her school and the others to their respective homes.

I was now the housekeeper as well as nurse for my mother was still not able to be out of bed. One day while working around the house, I stooped over to pick up something and struck my eye on the top of a chair, causing a hemorrhage back of the ball. The doctor summoned did what he could -- but the suffering was intense. It was much worse when on my feet, but I would work around as long as I could endure it; I would lie down until it eased off, then get up and go on.

While things were in this condition, word came that Emma had been offered a government position in the Des Moines Pension Office. She had taken the Civil Service examination the year before as she was growing a little tired of teaching and longed to be at home with more free time. She had given up all hope that anything would come of it. It seemed like an answer to prayer and it did not take her long to decide. It meant giving up her profession in which she had won success and a good reputation; also a good salary for the government job paid much less. However, it meant that she could be at home with more free time to devote to her family. As soon as the school board would release her, she came home and

entered upon her new duties. Little did she or any of us realize the far-reaching effects of this change in her work. We rejoiced in having her with us all the time and that was enough for us.

In the spring of that same year my niece Nettie was married to Mahlon J. Hammer. They had been sweethearts ever since high school days. Mr. Hammer had taken a course in engineering at the Iowa Agricultural College and was now located with a firm in Chicago. My sister Mary's husband, Otis West, had enlisted during the Spanish-American War and remained with the army. Mary accompanied her daughter to her new home so we were again separated from her.

Now began a new chapter in my ever changing life. I was in full charge of the home for my parents and sister Emma. I had a most devoted and willing helper in the person of my father, who though never very handy about housework, could be eyes for me and that meant a lot. In time mother was able to sit up and even walk about the house or sit on the porch, but she was no longer able to do any real work and needed constant care. Her room became the center of the home. From it she directed me and to her I took all my household problems. To her I took my first loaf of bread and other first efforts in cookery -- and received her praise and good counsel. Emma's home-coming each evening was a joy to which we all looked forward. She always had some interesting experience to relate or incident to tell, and these brought us something of the outside world.

In the evening in mother's room Emma would read aloud; then came the best time of all as we prepared mother for the night. Father and Emma both needed their undisturbed rest, so it fell to me to sleep in mother's room. Those were precious days to look back upon -- filled as they were with those sweet intimacies that bind a family together. I now cared for my mother, washed, ironed, cleaned and did most of the cooking. At last I was really needed by those I loved best -- and who can ask for anything more satisfying? It was far from all work and no play. I kept up my club work and literary

interests. Emma could now accompany me to the social gatherings of my clubs and she joined our evening circle. The household routine was always so arranged as not to interfere with any of my outside interests. Mother enjoyed having me go out and come home to tell her all about it. In our lives and activities she really lived happily those last few years -- in spite of much suffering.

When Emma came home we dismissed our roomers and the first year we put in a downstairs bathroom. The next year we installed a furnace to replace the big hard coal heater and small stoves which had hitherto warmed the house. Gas lights also took the place of kerosene lamps. All these seemed to us luxuries -- and how mother did enjoy them! She used to often say that she had everything she wanted, and I believe she did, for her wants were simple and she was rich in loving care.

So the years slipped by. Sister Mary and Nettie came home on a visit bringing Nettie's first born, a boy named Hoyt. I had many letters from old school friends as well as new friends from Des Moines who had gone away. Each summer my old teacher, Miss Mattice, would pay us a visit. On one of these occasions we inaugurated a picnic in the park where all the old students who could come gathered for a reunion. This became an annual affair.

Christmas 1906 passed as usual. We always made it quite a festive occasion, decorating the house and giving and receiving simple gifts. On the morning of the 28th I rose as usual and went about my regular work. Mother had been very restless through the night, coughed a good deal and did not wish to get up. Before noon we realized that she was much worse and summoned the doctor. When we were advised to call Emma I knew it was serious. During the afternoon she failed rapidly. Our friend, Jessie Sankey, and the doctor remained with us most of the night. I sat at the head of the bed and when they would raise her to get her breath, I would slip in behind and hold her in my arms. It was thus that mother breathed her last at 5:30 Saturday morning, December 29th. Friends and neighbors rallied around us as they

always do on such occasions. Our oldest sister and her husband arrived that evening and Sister Mary came the next morning. On New Year's day, 1907, we laid her away in beautiful Woodland Cemetery.

That was the first break in our family circle -- and when it was all over I found myself prostrated with grief. It had been a long strain of care, anxiety and hard work. It seemed as if with the death of my mother another chapter in my life had closed--- although it was some time before I really took up the threads and went on to the next phase of my existence. For several years mother and I had played a little game in the spring to see which one of us would hear the first robin. To express my feelings I wrote the following verses:

WITHOUT THEE, DEAR

There's something in the sentient air,
A whispering through the leafless trees,
A thousand tokens everywhere.
What messengers are these?
They are the heralds of the spring,
They cry: "Rejoice, for spring is here!"
But in my heart there is no spring
Without thee, dear.

The robin sings at early morn,
Just as he sang one year ago,
And when the twilight shadows fall
He warbles sweet and low.
The blue birds and the meadow larks
I know sing just as sweet and clear--
But something from their songs I miss
Without thee, dear.

The sunlight seems not half so bright,
The flowers are not so sweet or fair,
The earth has lost its radiant light--
I miss thee everywhere!
And now I know 'tis love that casts
A halo round each object here,
And life can never be the same
Without thee, dear.

The year 1907 was marked by two important events. In March appeared the first issue of the Matilda Ziegler Magazine, financed by that great philanthropist, Mrs. Matilda Ziegler, and edited and managed by that noble-hearted and great lover of the blind, Walter G. Holmes. It is difficult for those of the present day with all its literature in embossed type, the Talking Books, and numerous magazines covering all subjects, to comprehend what this first general magazine in tangible print meant to me and other blind readers.

In the summer of that same year my niece Nettie and her little boy Hoyt came to visit us. During their stay, one afternoon while dressing in my upstairs room I somehow in stooping over struck my other eye. Up to that time, while my sight had continued to fail and I did not consider that what I had was of any particular value, still I could see light, the outline of objects and some bright colors. In a few days this was gone -- never to return. I recall distinctly coming out of my room and seeing a shaft of sunshine coming through a window at the end of the hall. That was my last glimpse of light. Then I realized what a help and comfort that little vision had been to me; and for the first time I felt really blind.

Now I was more depressed than ever. Emma had her work and the company of her fellow workers. As spring came again father was outside a great deal working in the yard and garden. Left alone in the house I felt that dreadful loneliness which only the loss of a loved one can bring. It seemed that I could not get back my physical grip on things. My dear sister did everything she could to help me. She read to me; she encouraged me to go places. She planned for me to go up to Vinton for Commencement, but when the day came and I did not feel equal to going alone, she arranged on short notice to go with me. Even after reaching the station and our tickets purchased, I felt too ill to go and had to return home.

Among those who were at Vinton that year was Eva Whitcomb. We had been very fond of each other in school. Now she came to make me a short visit but remained five years. She was alone in the world

with a small income but no fixed home. Although she had only light perception she had learned to do all kinds of work, as I did. Besides being a great help, she was good company and we had so much in common. She asked no wages, but was grateful for a home where she could feel she was really wanted. Now that I had some one with me all the time to help with the work and to share my daily thoughts and pleasures, I began to steadily improve and soon was quite well and strong. Even though I did not go to Vinton that spring of 1908, I had sent a paper to be read before the Alumni Association, advocating the establishment of a "Home for Sightless Women." The Association voted to sponsor such an effort. I was one of a committee appointed to draft articles of incorporation and solicit funds. A Des Moines Association was also formed of which I became the first president.

The following spring (1909) Eva and I went up to Vinton for Commencement and at the Alumni meeting we made further plans for the Home. At this meeting it was also decided to send a representative to the National Association Convention to be held that spring in Columbus, Ohio. I was chosen as the delegate. I returned home to make preparations. Then I took a severe cold and developed a deep-seated cough; but I was determined to go. I was most anxious to attend our National Association and meet some of the people with whom I had corresponded for years. A former school friend with fairly good sight, her son, and Louis Howard, a blind piano tuner, accompanied me from Des Moines. It took us a night and a day to make the trip. I was ill all the way and after I reached Columbus. However, I enjoyed the meeting and got a lot out of it.

What a thrill it was to meet and talk with Mr. Joel W. Smith, Editor of "The Mentor," Doctor Edward Allen of Perkins, and many others. It was there that I first met that dynamic personality, Charles F. F. Campbell, Secretary of the American Association of Workers for the Blind (known as the A. A. W. B.). By his untiring work and enthusiasm he made of the new organization a real power in work for the blind. Mr. Campbell's father, Francis

Campbell, was the blind American who founded and so long directed the Royal Normal College for the Blind in England. For his remarkable achievement he was knighted by King Edward VII.

In spite of my illness, the meeting and the personalities I met were an inspiration to me, and I returned home full of enthusiasm and the determination to apply what I had learned to the work in Iowa. On my way home I visited my cousin Jessie in Janesville, Wisconsin. Her mother, my Aunt Adelia, had passed away some years before. I also spent some time with my relatives in Chicago and stayed a few days with Blanche Fearing's mother and sister. That was my longest trip alone and the farthest east I had ever been. When on my return trip I crossed the Mississippi river into Iowa and heard a news boy calling: "Des Moines Register and Leader," I could have hugged him it sounded so good to me!

Among those I met at the Convention and again in Chicago was Robert B. Irwin, a young blind man just graduated from Harvard and looking for his first position in his chosen field -- Work for the Blind. I may say right here that he soon found a place in the work and went on to greater and still greater things. In 1917 the American Foundation for the Blind was established with headquarters in New York City. He secured a position there and in time became its Executive Director. He now holds the title of Doctor Irwin. To Charles F. F. Campbell, the pioneer, and to Robert B. Irwin, the blind of this country owe a lasting debt of gratitude.

One of the topics discussed at the Convention of 1909 was the Type Question -- the relative merits of New York Point and American Braille. Each had its loyal supporters and discussion waxed hot and heavy with real bitterness among the rival factions. All realized the futility of going on printing books in two systems, but each felt that his system should be the one chosen. A committee was appointed to study the whole matter and report to the National Association. Mr. Irwin, the new President of the Association, wrote to me asking if I would serve on such a committee. It was a tempting offer. It meant travelling

from school to school and making comparative tests. Again I had to reject what seemed a wonderful opportunity. It was thought I could not well be spared from home and the growing work for the blind in Iowa; also, it was a question if my health would stand the strain.

I recommended Miss L. Pearl Howard, a graduate of the Iowa School. She was duly appointed and acquitted herself well. She not only visited the schools in the United States and Canada, but she crossed the Atlantic twice to study English Braille in England. I will not deny that I was a little envious of her in having such opportunities to travel and help in the work which now had become to me the all absorbing theme of my life. Not that I would have taken anything from her, or felt that I could have done better. We in Iowa were proud that one of our number had been able to do such a real service.

I was fairly contented. There was never anything more satisfying to me than to make home comfortable for those I loved. Eva and I shared in the household tasks and got a lot of fun out of trying new recipes and attempting new things. My friends, father and sister Emma accepted Eva and came to be fond of her not only for herself -- but they soon saw what she could do for me. They were all most cooperative in making her feel at home with us. I also had my two clubs which offered mental and social stimulus.

"The Mentor," the magazine in which my little story had appeared, had long been discontinued. However, in 1910 Mr. Charles F. F. Campbell had established "The Outlook for the Blind." He wrote to me asking permission to republish my story, "After Graduation." Of course, I was willing and on looking it over found very little to change. I wrote a short "Introduction" and again it went forth, destined this time to carry its message to a much larger audience. Later Mr. Campbell had it published in pamphlet form and sold in a limited edition. Mr. Walter G. Holmes also printed it in the "Ziegler Magazine" and it was translated into at least one foreign language. I received many complimentary letters and it brought me a host of acquaintances, both at home and abroad.

All this meant much to me then and in later years. I am told that it had much to do with establishing the teaching of Domestic Science in our schools. All this was a great joy to me!

The Industrial Home for the Blind which we had helped to establish back in the 1890's had not been a success, and finally was abandoned. This made our new project -- a "Home for Sightless Women" -- even more imperative. Eva Whitcomb had become much interested in the movement and proved a valuable addition to the Board of Trustees. A Ladies Aid Association had been formed in Des Moines. We held regular meetings to sew and make things for sale, and to plan ways and means for raising money. Soon we had quite a little nest-egg in the bank.

In September 1910 the State Association met in Des Moines with the Des Moines Association as its host. Our home was filled to capacity with old school friends. When the Convention closed, father and Emma left for a short trip which took them to Chicago, Janesville, Wis., and Auburn, N. Y. In Auburn my father visited his only remaining sister, Catherine; and Emma made the acquaintance of cousins on her father's side with whom she had corresponded for some time. I was left with a house full of company, mostly blind; only one or two had partial sight. With Eva's help we got along nicely.

Among my neighbors was Louis Howard and his wife, Amelia; both from the I. C. B. Louis was a very successful piano tuner. Amelia and her little daughter, Kathryn, were often at our home and we had many a gay time together. While many of my old friends had gone, still I had many left, and my life was moving along smoothly and pleasantly.

I was frequently called upon to speak before clubs and various organizations on behalf of our Home for Sightless Women. In the spring of 1911 Emma and I went to Sioux City where I presented our work to the State Federation of Women's Clubs. Mr. Charles F. F. Campbell was there also to present the general work for the blind, and he introduced me. It was not so difficult now for me to speak in a parlor or informal gathering, but I well recall that I was frightened almost

out of my wits on this occasion, and did not sleep a wink through the night that followed.

Mr. Campbell returned to Des Moines with us and spoke at two or three gatherings previously arranged for him. He stayed at our home and with the Howards -- and made many friends. That same spring Eva and I, accompanied by Amelia and Kathryn, went up to Vinton for Commencement and our Alumni meeting. Although I did not know it then -- that was to be my last visit to my Alma Mater. Events were moving swiftly -- unfolding more and more the strange pattern of my life.

The Des Moines Pension Agency, where my sister Emma had now been employed for nearly ten years, was one of eighteen such groups scattered throughout the forty-eight states. A rumor was now afloat that these were all to be consolidated at Washington, D. C. At first it was just talk, but in 1913 it became a reality. The clerks were given the opportunity to go to Washington, if they so desired. It was a somewhat difficult decision to make. Emma had been steadily promoted and liked her work. It meant making a drastic change -- leaving our comfortable home and all our friends for a new life in strange surroundings. My father was past eighty but in good physical condition, and he was quite willing to go anywhere with his "two girls."

For me it meant the greatest change of my whole life! It meant leaving my native state; all the old friends; and all the many and varied associations of my early life. It also meant giving up the work for the blind which I had helped to inaugurate. Above all -- it meant separation from my dear friend, Eva. She would gladly have gone with us, but it seemed that the work for the new Home for Sightless Women could not well spare both of us. We had already purchased a building and were hopeful of opening the Home in a short time. If all went well and the Home once got underway, then perhaps Eva would come to us in Washington; at least she and I comforted ourselves with this thought.

In February 1913 Emma left with the rest of the office force to try it out and see how she liked it. Her

letters were full of the many interesting sights which she saw in our Nation's Capital! She soon received another promotion to what was then thought to be a very good salary, and that definitely decided the matter.

In June of that year, Eva and I attended the Convention of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, held in Jacksonville, Ill. There I met old friends and formed some new acquaintances. I returned home to prepare for the great move. It was a busy summer for there was much to be done. Old friends came to make us farewell visits -- and all the while I was planning and packing. Finally, we rented our house for we still expected this move was only a temporary one and that eventually we would return to Des Moines. Emma rented a small house in Washington and came home in August to help in the final breaking up of the home. We sold some of our furniture, gave away many pieces and left others in the house.

At last it was all over! Our good-bys were said; we paid our last visit to our dear mother's grave; and last of all Eva and I said a tearful but hopeful farewell. It must have been terribly hard for her -- for she was so alone -- but she faced it courageously and we hoped to be reunited soon. It was not so to be -- I never saw her again. We corresponded faithfully. When we parted she went to live with a friend. Within the next year or two the Home for Sightless Women was opened and Eva became its first matron. Her health had not been good for some time; she developed tuberculosis and after a lingering illness she passed away. Thus death took from me another of my school friends. Their places would never be filled and their memories are still sweet after all these years.

It was a hot morning in the latter part of August that we left Des Moines where we had lived for more than twenty years -- and where I had known much of joy and sorrow. After spending a few days in Chicago with Mary and Nettie (the latter now had two children -- Hoyt and Mary), we arrived in Washington, D. C.

LIFE IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

As I start this new period of my life's history I recall some lines which I first composed as part of an editorial for the Matilda Ziegler Magazine. I had the honor of editing that braille publication in June 1926. I quote these lines here as a fitting eulogy on the last and now permanent city of my adoption:

OUR NATION'S CAPITAL

Fair city of a Nation's pride
Outspread along the river's side,
And stretching back o'er hill and plain--
Of thee I sing, an humble strain!

Where once primeval forest stood
And savage hunter roamed the wood,
Behold what magic man hath wrought
With highest skill and noblest thought
To build a city that shall stand--
The pride and glory of our land!

Her rounded domes and sculptured walls
On which the sunlight softly falls;
Her long dim aisles of stately trees,
Where fountains cool the summer breeze;
Her monuments on every hand
Reared to the heroes of our land!--

All these are but the outward part
Within which throbs a nation's heart!

It was on August 28, 1913, that we stepped from the train, passed through the Union Station and came out on the Capital Plaza. To me born and bred in Iowa, the East and especially Washington, D. C. symbolized romance, history and all that we held sacred in our past. But here I was entering our Nation's Capital to be a part of it! What did it all mean? What lay ahead

of me? What part was this new life to have in the pattern of my unfolding years? I felt all these things even though I did not put them into words. There was something exciting in the very air of that summer afternoon -- a different odor which I never quite defined! I often noticed these strange odors when I first entered a new place.

We went at once to the house in downtown Washington where Emma had been rooming and where she had engaged temporary accommodations for us. We took our meals at a nearby restaurant. The next morning which was Friday, Emma took us across town to show us our new home. All the way on the street car she pointed out places of interest and told me the directions at every turn, so that I could orient myself. When we passed the Capitol and Library of Congress I was thrilled -- and that was only the beginning! We passed around Lincoln Park where stands the famous statue of the great Emancipator striking the shackles from the slave kneeling at his feet.

Leaving the car we walked about two blocks to a small brick house set in a row, each house so much alike that one had to look close to recognize his own. It was much smaller than the house we had left in Des Moines, but pleasant, comfortable and convenient. It fronted on a broad avenue shaded by stately elms. Straight across was a triangular plot of green formed by the junction of street and avenue. These triangles, sometimes called circles, are characteristic of Washington. The front porch and the two porches in the rear, upstairs and down, seemed to enlarge the house which with its six rooms, halls, bathroom and closets, was ample for our needs. Here we lived very comfortably for five years. After looking the place over, we went downtown to make some necessary purchases and then back to our rooms. Next morning we returned to our house armed with a few dishes and cooking utensils we had brought in our trunk, and remained until our purchases of the previous day arrived -- a bed, couch, table and a few chairs.

The next day, Sunday, we rested in our rooms until afternoon. Then we took a street car ride out through Georgetown, the oldest part of the city. Alighting from the car we walked across Key Bridge which spanned the Potomac River and I stood for the first time on the soil of historic Virginia. That was another thrilling moment! On our way there and back we passed in sight of the Washington Monument, the White House and other historic places -- and the afternoon was full of thrills!

On Monday morning Emma returned to her office and father and I betook ourselves to our new home to set up housekeeping in earnest. I began a systematic cleaning of the place although it was in very good condition. It was a sort of camping out until Wednesday when our household goods arrived from Des Moines. When these were all in place it really began to seem like home. We found plenty of stores nearby and soon had everything in good running order.

As soon as we were well settled, we began to explore Washington. Although my father was then eighty-two he was keenly interested in seeing all the sights in and about the Capital City. He would get books and we would read about buildings and places and then go and see them. One lovely autumn day we visited Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington. That was the acme of thrills! We made the trip by boat and even though I took many more excursions on the Potomac River in the years that followed, this one stands out in my memory as something special!

In October, my dear friend Hattie Hoff, who as I have related was now living in Warren, Pa., came to visit us. It had been more than fourteen years since we had seen each other. She now had two boys, aged ten and twelve, but once together we were the same gay, giggling girls as ever! And how Hattie did enthuse over Washington! Going about with her I saw many new and interesting things through her eager, comprehending eyes.

More than thirty years have passed since those first wonderful days, and today I know far less about Washington than I did after a few months residence.

Two great World Wars wrought many changes, expanding the clean, quiet Capital into a bustling, crowded city, where much that was beautiful had to be sacrificed for expediency. I am glad that I knew it as it was in those early days -- not a great city -- but clean and beautiful with its broad streets, magnificent trees through which gleamed the white marble of stately buildings unsullied by grime and smoke. It seemed then a quiet, dignified, unhurried place -- proudly upholding its tradition and memories of the past and all the great people who had made it what it was!

Mr. Charles F. F. Campbell had written telling me all about the various activities for the blind in the District of Columbia. He advised me to make my first contact with the work for the blind in the Library of Congress. Accordingly, as soon as time permitted, escorted by my father I visited the Library. We found Mrs. Gertrude T. Rider in charge of the Room for the Blind. In fact, she was the whole thing at that time. The one large room on the ground floor housed the entire collection of embossed books; and furnished accommodations for exhibit tables, office space and reception room.

Mrs. Rider received us most graciously, and while my father explored the rest of the Library, she and I got acquainted. I felt at home with her from the very first and later we became good friends. While I was there Harriet Stone, a bright young blind woman, came in with her sister Helen. Harriet and I were attracted to each other and were destined to be much together. There too I met Mr. H. R. W. Miles, a blind music teacher and President of the Columbia Polytechnic Institute for the Blind.

In a few days I received a formal invitation to visit the Polytechnic which I did. There I met a group of people with some of whom I was later to be closely associated. These included Mr. R. W. Swann and his sister who were In Charge of the Institute, Susie I. Duffy, Catherine L. Grady, Louise Patterson and others who were employed there. Every month this group had a social evening and my sister and I, Harriet Stone and her sister, and a few others, were

invited. When summer came they had many outings -- all most enjoyable. I found that all these people had read my little story, "After Graduation," and this proved a very pleasant introduction. I soon had a number of congenial acquaintances and enjoyed the social life among them.

Naturally I was interested in the Home for the Blind at 3050 R Street, N.W., in Georgetown. At the invitation of the President of the Board of Lady Managers, I attended one of their meetings at the Home. I was not very favorably impressed with the management, nor with the matron. In time death removed the latter and it became quite a different place. That winter's day while I was in the board meeting, my father explored the surrounding places of interest -- especially Oak Hill Cemetery where John Howard Paine, author of "Home Sweet Home," and other noted people, lie buried.

We had placed our letters with the Metropolitan Baptist Church in our neighborhood and this brought us other pleasant associations. Several of the Iowa Pension Office force in Des Moines had come to Washington, and occasionally they and their families met together; also, there was an Iowa Society and for several years my sister and I attended their gatherings. All this with my home duties kept me more than busy. I now did all the housework with what help my father could give me. This place was so conveniently arranged that to keep house in it was a real joy. I cooked, canned fruit, made jelly and preserves, cleaned and did much of the washing and ironing.

Perhaps I did a little too much for I was very much run down and the doctor recommended a change. Hattie and Ira had urged me to visit them and in July 1915 I spent three happy weeks with them in Warren, Pa. How I did enjoy it! Together we roamed the hills and woods -- just as in the good old days back in Des Moines. We had picnics and with them I visited Chatauqua for the first time. I returned home much improved in health. The next summer Ira spent a week with us, and in the fall sister Mary came for a visit.

In the summer of 1913 the more advanced blind people in Washington had organized the District of Columbia Association of Workers for the Blind. After we became acquainted with this group, my sister and I were elected to membership. In September 1916, I was made President and held that office for three years. The Association grew and accomplished some real objectives. It established a Beneficiary Fund and raised money in various ways. Its social meetings were held at the homes of the members and ours was a frequent meeting place. My sister took real pleasure in these occasions, and spared no pains in decorating the house and entertaining our guests. She also served the Association as its Treasurer for sixteen years.

We were hardly settled in our new home when the first World War broke. How remote it seemed at first. Even after the United States entered the war in 1917 it still seemed something far away. We had no one near to us in the Service. We had no radios to bring far-away happenings close. The daily papers kept us informed; and the rise in prices and scarcity of many things soon made us realize that this war was going to affect all our lives. Among the young women who had been transferred from Des Moines to Washington along with my sister was Nette Herrick. When the war came the family with whom she lived was unable to keep her any longer and she could find no place to go, so we took her in. We gave her our back room and at once she became a part of our family. A boarder naturally added to my burdens as housekeeper and cook, but I rather enjoyed having Nette with us.

Real estate was having a boom and rents skyrocketed, but our landlord did not raise on his price and we felt quite secure. Then suddenly one morning as I was ironing some curtains, two ladies appeared and asked to be shown over the house. One of them informed me that she had bought the place. In a sort of daze I showed them around -- and when they had gone I called my sister. She went at once to the agent only to find that it was all too true. Our landlord

owned four adjoining houses and already two were sold; the other two were for sale. In vain we sought for a home elsewhere either to rent or buy, but no desirable place was available.

At length we decided to purchase one of the two remaining houses in the row. It was an exact duplicate of the one in which we had lived for five years -- hence everything would fit perfectly. My sister went to the tenants and asked them if they wished to buy it and they said they could not purchase it. After the sale was arranged, these people refused to leave and even carried the matter into court. My sister being a government employee, which the tenants were not, she was granted priority. The purchase was made in March 1918, and it was not until the 18th of June that we were able to take possession. Then we discovered that this house was not in nearly as good condition as the one we had left. While we had lived there for five years we had taken good care of it. Our present home had been occupied by two or three families, and when the last tenants found they must leave they did everything possible to wreck the place. However, we were thankful to be in our own home and hoped to soon repair the damages.

In the meantime, my sister's Chief at the Pension Office, Mr. David Braun, found himself in a bad situation. The house in which he and his wife were living was sold and he was forced to buy. They purchased the one remaining house in our row, and met with the same stubborn resistance from the occupants who refused to move out. The purchaser of our home had been very considerate, knowing that we would move as soon as we could get possession of our property. But Mr. and Mrs. Braun were being made most uncomfortable.

After a family conference we allowed the Brauns to move in with us, with all their household belongings. Thus it came about that the furniture of the two families was packed into one six room house -- and so we lived during the summer of 1918. The Brauns were fine people, staunch Roman Catholics, but that made no difference with us. My father, then in his eighty-seventh year, welcomed them cordially

and never complained at any personal inconvenience. Miss Herrick gave up her room to the Brauns and my sister and I shared our room with her. They made as little trouble as possible, getting their own meals or taking them out. All thought of thoroughly cleaning or regulating the house had to be abandoned -- we just lived from day to day and tried to make the best of it.

The arrival of a new baby in the house the Brauns had purchased further delayed the tenants leaving, but finally in late September we saw them depart. After two more weeks of strenuous cleaning and fumigating, Mrs. Braun had her new home ready and their belongings were duly transferred. These good people continued to be our neighbors until 1922 when Mrs. Braun passed away. After her death Mr. Braun sold the house to a widow, Mrs. Carpenter, and her two daughters. These too were our good neighbors for many years.

Then I began to set our house in order, and it was no small task. The whole place had to be repapered, and the woodwork and floors refinished; but it was all done before cold weather set in and we were once more living like civilized people. I have gone into all this rather in detail to show some of the problems the folks at home suffered because of the war, but we took it all bravely and cheerfully, knowing that it was so little compared with the sacrifices our boys were making. We felt our living disturbance was our greatest experience of the war -- but for me a far greater consequence was to come out of it.

In the summer of 1918, a stream of wounded servicemen was steadily drifting back to our shores. The American Red Cross, like the Great Mother she is, waited with open arms to receive and care for them. Among them all, none seemed more in need of help and sympathy than those blinded in battle. A training school was established near Baltimore, Md., known as "Evergreen," or "The Red Cross Institute." Here were gathered all types of young men with varying background and education, but with one thing in common -- blindness -- and the need to

learn how to live without the great blessing of sight. One of the first attempts at rehabilitation was the teaching of "touch-reading." This trained the hand and cultivated the touch; also gave the men confidence and a new interest in life.

To understand what followed it is necessary to explain the situation with regard to the embossed type. About a century earlier Louis Braille, a blind Frenchman, had devised a dot system which now bears his name. It was not until after his death that his system came into practical use in France, and later it was adapted to the languages of other European countries. In the United States there was a feeling against copying the European code; hence educators of the blind set about to formulate their own system.

At Perkins Institution in Boston, Mass., Mr. Joel W. Smith, a blind man, worked out a code known as American Braille; while at the New York Institute, New York City, Mr. William B. Wait, a sighted man, evolved another dot system called New York Point. In time these two systems were adopted by the various schools for the blind throughout the country in about equal proportion. Each system had its advantages and disadvantages; but worst of all was the resulting confusion. Few blind people learned both systems. Textbooks and the few books for general readers which were printed had to be embossed in both types. This added to the already almost prohibitive cost. No wonder books were scarce and readers comparatively few. Line type books which had at first been used were found difficult for many to read, and it could not be written. In this latter respect the dot systems had a decided advantage.

When the blind people of the nation organized the American Association of Workers for the Blind, one of their first acts was to tackle this problem. At first the question was: "Should it be New York Point or American Braille?" Both had ardent supporters and feeling ran high. A committee was appointed to study the relative merits and they spent several years in painstaking investigation. It was this committee on which I had been asked to serve

back in 1909 but was obliged to decline. The committee visited schools and other centers of education and influence throughout the United States and Canada, and made various tests. Finally, the original braille as used in England and Canada entered the field of inquiry and further complicated matters. The committee went to England twice to study the question at first hand.

After long and patient research, the committee reported in favor of English Braille. Much discussion followed and at last the recommendation was adopted, but a compromise was made. The original braille alphabet was to be used but not as many contractions as practiced in England. Thanks to the ingenuity of Mr. H. Randolph Latimer, a blind educator, a simplified system was worked out known as "Revised Braille, Grade One and a Half." This system was officially adopted in 1917 and was intended to supersede all previous types; but the new system made slow headway. Thus it came about that when the blinded soldiers were learning to read, there was nothing for them. Only a few books had as yet been printed in the new system and these were mostly for children. There seemed little incentive to these men to learn braille.

Then it was that certain women volunteers of the country valiantly came to the rescue. They proposed to learn braille and copy by hand suitable material for the boys at "Evergreen." Mrs. Donald M. Forgan was the first to volunteer. At that time she resided in Washington, D. C. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Forgan moved to Chicago where she did much to foster the braille work in the Chicago Chapter. Soon other volunteers took up the work and these all came to Mrs. Rider, In Charge of the Room for the Blind, Library of Congress, for instructions and guidance. Mrs. Rider enthusiastically encouraged them but she knew little of braille, and she turned to me to assist her in this new enterprise.

So it was that during the eventful summer of 1918, when our home was sheltering two families and living conditions were somewhat difficult, I was spending considerable time at the Library. I

proofread manuscript and prepared instructions to go out by mail to the ever increasing number of women, eager to join the ranks and help in this novel and much needed work. How glad I was that I had mastered each system as it came along. I must confess, however, that at that time I really knew very little of the technical aspects of the new braille. I could read and write it but I had no knowledge of the rules; in fact, none had been printed. It was not until several months later that I received these rules from Mr. Latimer, and gradually applied them to the work.

In the fall (1918) Miss Mabel T. Boardman, Director of Volunteer Service, District of Columbia Chapter, American National Red Cross, organized classes for the study of Braille Transcribing. The groups consisted of young women, mostly government workers here in Washington. Miss Boardman asked for a teacher and Mrs. Rider recommended me. Mrs. Larz Anderson gave us a room in her beautiful home on Dupont Circle, and there we had our first general meeting on the night of Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. Never shall I forget that evening! To reach the Anderson home we had to pass through downtown Washington, and that night the streets were alive with a wild, surging mob of happy, excited people showing their joy in typical American style.

We organized five classes, each consisting of ten or twelve young women. During the winter I taught these classes five nights a week. Usually my sister went with me but sometimes Miss Herrick or some other friend accompanied me. My family had all been teachers and I think I had some talent along that line. But here was a subject which had no existing textbook. I had to formulate my own lessons and method of teaching. It was quite different from teaching a blind person to read. These were all sighted people who must be taught to write correct braille. They were eager, intelligent young women and made good progress.

Ever since I left school I had longed for an opportunity like this and at last it had come. My sister had always made me feel that I more than paid my way by what I did in the home, but naturally I was not

quite satisfied. I wanted to earn money and I had done so in many small ways. Now here I was doing something constructive and delightful -- and being paid by the American Red Cross. Before spring my girls were turning out books and even a magazine for the boys at "Evergreen." After they had mastered braille, I reduced my classes to one meeting a week. For sometime I supervised their work, proofreading and correcting their manuscripts at home. I also went frequently to the Library to assist Mrs. Rider.

Groups of volunteers had continued to organize in various parts of the country for the purpose of transcribing. Some of these, as in Chicago, were able to secure instruction locally, but the majority had to depend on being taught by correspondence. Mrs. Rider had now been appointed National Adviser on Braille by the American Red Cross; and she already had a sighted secretary to assist her. I started working with Mrs. Rider as a volunteer, but in the summer of 1919 she insisted on paying me by the day. Every braille manuscript, whether produced in New York, Chicago or San Francisco, had to come to Mrs. Rider and be approved by her before it could go to "Evergreen." This meant that I must read, correct and report on all of them. All this kept me more than busy even though I did much of this work at home.

One day Mrs. Rider asked me if I thought I could take a position with her -- doing the work of a sighted secretary as well as attending to the technical details. I was surprised and a little frightened! I told her I did not really know. She said that she could not employ both a sighted secretary and me. She felt that my help was necessary to the success of the work and was willing to take the risk. After thinking it over and conferring with my family, I consented to try it. However, I stipulated that a proofreader should also be employed, as I could not do that work along with what else would be required. Mrs. Rider agreed and left it to me to find a proofreader. I selected Susie I. Duffy, whom I had come to know fairly well, and had confidence in her ability and general character. I felt we could work together,

and in the years that followed my confidence was fully justified.

The secretary assigned to Mrs. Rider found another position and I was called to the Library of Congress to carry on about the middle of September, 1919. Shortly after on October 1, Miss Duffy and I were duly placed on the payroll of the American National Red Cross. Mrs. Rider was at that time receiving One Hundred Dollars ($100.00) per month from the Library and she insisted that the Red Cross pay me the same amount, although I would have accepted less. In those days that was considered a good salary and few blind people in the whole country were receiving more.

In the summer of 1920 I spent my two weeks vacation with my good friends, Hattie and Ira Hoff, in Warren, Pa. They now had an automobile and we took long, delightful rides visiting Niagara Falls and going over into Canada. I returned just in time to attend the funeral of Harriet Stone, my first and good friend in Washington, who had died suddenly following an operation. I came back to my work much refreshed but saddened by Harriet's death.

It is not my intention in this narrative to relate the history of Braille Transcribing as conducted by the American Red Cross, in cooperation with the Library of Congress. That story deserves a volume all to itself! It should be written to commemorate the brave and tireless workers, who made such a splendid contribution to our braille literature at a time when it was so greatly needed! In these pages I shall only touch upon those conditions and events which affected me personally.

Hitherto my work and activities had been carried on mostly within my own home. I had used the typewriter for years, but only for personal correspondence and preparing work for publication. I was fifty years old -- rather late to enter upon a new career -- but such it was to be! Mrs. Rider depended on me not only for the technical knowledge, but also for the composition and typing of all letters, lessons and reports. She gave me invaluable aid; she was kind and patient, but exacting and critical;

she was also a wonderful organizer. Her confidence in my ability carried me through many a perplexing situation. She read the letters to me and I was expected to write suitable answers. Together we worked out many a difficult problem, and came to enjoy our collaborations in preparing articles and reports for publication.

I brought to my work some natural ability as a writer and teacher; a knowledge of work for the blind and the workers throughout the country, acquired during the years when my interest had never lagged. Above all, I was determined to succeed now that this opportunity had come to me, not only to earn a fair salary but to participate in the very kind of work I loved best -- that of helping my fellow blind.

Those first two or three years were filled with many trying experiences which taxed my physical strength to the utmost. It seemed that whenever I came to a really difficult place in my life some good friend came to my rescue. This time it was Mrs. Edith Kale. Mrs. Kale was employed by War Service in the Library of Congress. She had been temporarily assigned as secretary to Mrs. Rider to carry on a special line of work. Her desk was near mine and often unobtrusively she would come to me when I was in trouble, correct some mistake in my typing or explain something I did not understand. Her daughter, Norma, then a young high school girl, came on Saturdays and did my filing. All this was a great help for which I was profoundly grateful! Mrs. Kale and her family are still included among my good friends.

By 1921 Miss Mabel T. Boardman had been made National Director of Volunteer Service, American Red Cross, and the organization voted to make Braille Transcribing a part of its peace-time program; also that all volunteers should work through their local chapters. At that time only six chapters had undertaken the work. They were: Boston, Mass., Chicago, Ill., Pasadena, Calif., Providence, R. I., St. Paul, Minn., and Washington, D. C. There were also a number of individuals working independently. They all looked to us in the Library of Congress for direction.

In October of that same year the American Red Cross held its National Convention in Columbus, Ohio. Mrs. Rider and I attended. We had a booth where we explained and demonstrated braille. We had as assistants some volunteer braillists from the Chicago and St. Paul Red Cross Chapters; also a blind veteran, Barney Corcoran, from "Evergreen," in Baltimore, Md. The meeting at Columbus stimulated the spread of Braille Transcribing and the organizing of many new groups in various Red Cross chapters.

In the spring of 1922 I nearly had a nervous breakdown. I could not sleep and had no appetite. Friends said I should try a change and rest in Atlantic City, so Emma and I went there for a week. I did not like Atlantic City at all and was sick in bed most of the time I was there; nevertheless, I think it did me good and strengthened me for even more strenuous days ahead.

By this time the work had so expanded that it was no longer possible for me to handle the correspondence and also the technical part of the work. In July 1922, Miss Violet M. Savage, a sighted secretary, was employed. This greatly relieved me for I could now dictate correspondence and that gave me more time for other things. During the next two or three years we added another stenographer, Miss Agnes Jones, and two blind assistants, Mr. B. L. Frisbie and Miss Catherine L. Grady. Mrs. Rider and I had worked out a correspondence course of ten lessons, designed especially for sighted volunteers. At first these were typed, then mimeographed and finally printed in a pamphlet entitled "Braille Transcribing -- A Manual."

At the Annual Convention of the American Red Cross held in Washington, D. C., in October 1922, there was a braille exhibit of books, apparatus and literature. The work was explained and demonstrations given by Washington and out-of-town transcribers. In the program of Volunteer Service, Miss Anna C. Koerper, a braillist of the District of Columbia Chapter, gave a short talk on braille, followed by discussion which was participated in by

many workers present. They all seemed to find inspiration and help in personal contact with the work and workers at Headquarters.

In the meantime, what of the home where I had considered myself so necessary? When I went to work in the Library we told Miss Herrick she would have to find another boarding place, which she did reluctantly. For a time we tried to carry on with the help of a colored woman, but it was too lonely for our father. Finally we arranged with my sister Mary to come and stay with us, at least for the winters. As she was living with her daughter Nettie in Chicago she agreed, and this arrangement continued for four years. In the summers we managed with a very reliable colored woman.

Mrs. Rider was absent from the Library on account of illness in the spring of 1923. At her request I was placed on the Library pay roll in order to sign correspondence which went out under the franking privilege. This meant that I now drew two salaries, one from the American Red Cross and the other from the Library. These were gradually increased as the years went by until my income amounted to Thirty-three Hundred Dollars ($3300.00) per year. The Tenth Biennial Convention of the American Association of Workers for the Blind was held that spring in Janesville, Wis. I went in Mrs. Rider's place and presented a paper on "Hand-Embossing of Braille Books by Volunteers of the American Red Cross."

On September 3, 1923, our family circle was again broken by the death of our dear father. He passed away on Labor Day after a brief illness. In ten days he would have been ninety-two years old. Except for some deafness, he was in possession of all his faculties. Sister Mary was at home in Chicago. Emma and I took our father back to Des Moines and laid him to rest beside our dear mother in beautiful Woodland Cemetery. Old friends rallied around us and the funeral parlor was crowded on that lovely autumn day. One of the Bible Department Professors at Drake University, who had been a neighbor of ours, conducted the service. He spoke feelingly of my father's long life. After visiting

friends and relatives in Iowa and spending a few days in Chicago, we returned to Washington, D. C. It seemed no longer necessary for sister Mary to spend her winters with us, especially as she was far from well.

Later in the fall of that same year Hattie came again to visit us -- and what a grand time we had together! Although Emma and I were both at work, Hattie could entertain herself and we each took some time off; we also spent delightful evenings together. I know that Hattie enjoyed seeing me in my office, busy and happy, and she rejoiced with me! Soon after Hattie's departure, Miss Anna Dawson, a former acquaintance from Iowa and now secretary to an Iowa Senator, came to live with us as a roomer. We felt she would be company for us for sometimes we were very lonely. She remained with us two years when she returned home to care for her aging mother and father.

For years I had suffered with my eyes and knew that they should be removed. As long as my father lived I hesitated to have it done for it would have hurt him terribly. Now, however, my dear sister knowing how I suffered gave her consent, and the operation was performed in the spring of 1924. After this experience I never again dreaded going into a hospital. The surgeon who operated said it was one of the worst cases he had ever known, and that it was done none too soon as it might have affected the brain. I had hoped to be able to use artificial eyes but the surgeon discouraged me. He said the eye sockets were too sensitive and that glass eyes would irritate. My friends declared that they would rather see me with glasses as they had always known me. The operation had been a shock to my nervous system and I did not fully recover until midsummer.

As Emma was still working and we now owned our home free of debt, we felt that we could have more of the comforts of life, but we were never extravagant; and we gave liberally to charity. We bought our first radio, an Atwater-Kent Table Model. We became radio fans and continued to take great pleasure in it -- one of the greatest of modern inventions. We also felt

we could afford a housekeeper for we were tired of taking many of our meals out and shifting for ourselves at home. We were fortunate in finding just the right sort of person. Mrs. Margaret Chew, whom everyone called "Grandmother," an elderly but still active woman, came to us in the fall of 1925 and remained for five years.

Also in the year 1925, Mrs. Gertrude T. Rider, now Librarian for the Blind, Library of Congress, and National Director of Braille, American Red Cross, resigned her dual position because of her approaching marriage. She became Mrs. Fred Harpham and went to live in Akron, Ohio. When Mrs. Rider first communicated her plans to me and said she expected me to carry on the work of Braille Transcribing, I was greatly disturbed. I was hesitant to assume such a responsibility without her help, but there seemed no one else available and qualified to fill the position, and the work must go on. Thus it came about that I was placed in complete charge of the Red Cross work of Braille Transcribing, as well as being Assistant in what was now known as the "Service for the Blind," in the Library of Congress. But I was not to have the title of "Director" for many years -- a fact which was a thorn in the flesh.

The Librarian of Congress, Doctor Herbert Putnam, appointed his cousin, Miss Margaret D. McGuffey, as Librarian for the Blind and she was given the title of Director of Braille for the Red Cross. Miss McGuffey was a brilliant woman, educated in this country and abroad, but she knew nothing of work for the blind. Furthermore, she was in poor health. At first she tried to direct our work. When she found that I was quite capable of handling it, although willing to cooperate with her and accept any suggestions which were at all feasible, she gradually left me alone to carry on. We became good friends and I learned much from her in the way of general management, and the philosophy of getting along with people. After two years death took her from our midst. Mrs. Maude G. Nichols was then placed In Charge of the Service for the Blind, and I was given the title of Acting Director of Braille for the Red Cross.

The work was growing beyond our wildest dreams. The influence for good which Braille Transcribing had created was felt in many lines of work for the blind. It had stimulated blind readers by giving them more to read. It had proved of considerable help in educating the public to the real needs of the sightless. In 1925, "Evergreen," the training school for blinded soldiers near Baltimore, Md., was closed, and the men scattered to their respective homes in different locations became borrowers from general libraries. Therefore the various libraries for the blind of the country clamored for the hand-copied books. We began to supply these braille collections with new and varied titles of current literature for the use of both war and civilian blind. We were helping many students through high school and college, and other individuals in business and professions, by transcribing material they needed and could not secure elsewhere. We were also giving employment at home to some blind persons as proofreaders who were paid by the local Red Cross Chapters for which they worked.

As the work progressed and expanded other activities were developed. In order to enhance the value and usefulness of single hand-copied books, duplicating units were set up in some Red Cross Chapters. By such a method manifold copies could be produced from paper and metal plates, and these books would be available in various library collections and more widely distributed. Blind readers were benefitted by furnishing them with a more adequate supply of embossed literature. However, gratifying as were the results obtained the single copy book never diminished in value and continued to fill a great need.

Book-binding groups were also established in several chapters. This greatly facilitated the placing of completed braille manuscripts into circulation more quickly. Larger libraries for the blind were adequately equipped to bind hand-copied manuscripts, but the smaller library centers were unable to undertake such work. Volunteer book-binding, therefore, proved a great boon to these smaller but much needed

collections. The work compared favorably with the output from commercial binderies.

In all these undertakings we were assisted by several groups from volunteer organizations. Chief among them were the Junior League, American Legion, National Council of Jewish Women, Girl's Friendly Society of Epiphany Church, and others. These groups shellacked our braille manuscripts and helped in many other ways. The young women of the Junior League were especially helpful at the Library of Congress, where they not only did shellacking but performed a variety of clerical duties. For several years they contributed money to carry on their work during summer vacations.

When I was put in full charge of the work I organized a Book Committee consisting of several women, each outstanding in some special line of literary work. They met semi-monthly at the Library, reviewed and reported on all books previously assigned them. These titles had been suggested by transcribers, librarians, blind readers and friends. This committee was of great assistance to me in selecting the books to be transcribed.

No attempt had been made to push Braille Transcribing but rather a sincere effort to determine its rightful place in the Red Cross Volunteer Program and its real value to the sightless. We labored together -- the transcribers and other volunteer workers, the proofreaders and my staff -- all did their share to make this work a distinct service to humanity. I wanted no personal credit for what had been accomplished -- just to see results and feel that I was a part of it was enough for me!

In the fall of 1925 I took my first of many trips in the interest of the work. Emma always accompanied me and we managed to combine business with pleasure. This trip was to New York where representatives of various printing houses met to discuss their numerous problems. As this was my first visit to New York I was duly thrilled! Everywhere I went I was treated with kindness and respect and I realized that I was now recognized as one of the national workers for the blind.

The following spring (1926) we went to Chicago. This was entirely a vacation trip and made largely on my sister Mary's account, for she was rapidly failing. That was our last meeting with her for she died the next December. We mourned her loss for she had been very near and dear to us all. Our oldest sister, Clara Anet, had passed away earlier in the same year. In October we took another vacation and went up to Philadelphia. There we visited the Sesqui-Centennial and other places of historic interest. We went on to New York for a few days and from there to Atlantic City. This was a very enjoyable trip and changed my ideas of Atlantic City. From then on for many years we managed to spend at least one week each year in that famous resort, and learned to love it.

It had been one of my early dreams to visit Boston and in May 1927 this dream came true. Emma retired that spring and so was free to go with me with unlimited time at her disposal. As I frequently had some official leave on these trips my annual leave stretched out considerably. I always brought back something to help in my work for that was ever in my thoughts. In Boston we took a room at the Statler Hotel, quite new at that time, and very grand it seemed to us! We took our meals elsewhere, generally at one of Child's Restaurants. We had a radio in our room which had been one of its attractions for us. While there we heard of Lindberg's "Lone Flight to Paris," and of the floods which were sweeping the Mississippi Valley. One evening we heard Mr. Herbert Hoover broadcasting news of the flood and the rescue work of which he had charge.

We spent two days at the Perkins Institution, now located at Watertown, Mass., by invitation of the Superintendent, Doctor Edward E. Allen. We visited many places of historic interest such as Plymouth Rock, Concord and Salem. What a thrill for me to be in Paul Revere's old home and to climb the secret stairway in the "House of Seven Gables!" I loved Boston Common with its cool quiet, its flowers and beautiful lake where the swans floated.

Still in Boston on Memorial Day we went to Mount Auburn Cemetery where I thought my Aunt

Maria was buried. We failed to find her grave and I learned later that she was resting in Forest Hill Cemetery nearby. As we wandered about that lovely spot, we came upon the resting places of Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes and other famous people who made that place hallowed ground to me! It was a beautiful day and the birds were filling the air with their sweetest songs. I shall never forget the peace and loveliness of that morning. I like to go back to it in memory and feel as I did then that I was in an American "Westminster Abbey." Back at the Library and hard at work for a while, then off to Atlantic City in June for the Twelfth Biennial Convention of the A. A. W. B.

Next we began planning for a trip to California which should combine business with pleasure. This materialized in the fall of 1928. As I have written an account of this trip in detail in another volume entitled "My Trip to the Pacific Coast," which is now available in braille in the Library of Congress, I will only give an outline here. It was late August when we left Washington. After leaving Chicago we travelled by way of the Canadian Pacific to Vancouver, from thence by boat to Seattle with a brief stop at Victoria, B. C. We continued down the coast to Portland, Oregon, then to San Francisco, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, and home by way of Salt Lake City, Denver, Des Moines, St. Louis and Chicago.

Red Cross Chapters, especially in the Pacific Area, had urged me to visit them and the Secretary of that Area planned my itinerary. In every city meetings and luncheons were arranged at which I spoke concerning the work, held conferences and answered innumerable questions. After these meetings, cars and chauffeurs were at our disposal and we went sightseeing under most favorable conditions. I visited all the libraries for the blind in the region covered. The entire trip took two months and was one of the most pleasant and profitable experiences of my whole career. It was the year of the presidential election and while in Des Moines we cast our ballots for Mr. Herbert Hoover, who was almost unanimously elected.

The following winter, sister Emma had a serious illness and in the spring of 1929 when it came time for the A. A. W. B. Convention, held at Lake Wawasee, Indiana, she was unable to go with me. I went with Mrs. Maude G. Nichols, who was now Librarian for the Blind in the Library of Congress. We got along nicely together. Earlier that spring the American Library Association convened in Washington, D. C. Here for the first time Braille Transcribing was represented on an A. L. A. program. I presided over the Round Table for Librarians for the Blind and I did the same at Lake Wawasee, Indiana. I mention these facts only to show that I now had a standing among professional workers for the blind.

During that summer we installed an oil burner in our home and bought our second radio, also an Atwater-Kent, in a beautiful cabinet. In the fall, Emma being much better we paid a visit to her cousin in Auburn, N. Y., and also visited our good friends in Warren, Pa. All these trips were my vacations. I always came back refreshed, and with new ideas and greater inspiration for the work which now absorbed my whole life.

The year 1930 is chiefly memorable because at the end of the year our little housekeeper, Grandmother Chew, decided she was getting too old to work. She left us to enter the Baptist Old Ladies' Home where she lived for many years. In February of the next year Mrs. Edith Darr came to take her place. She was a very fine woman and we learned to love her. She was not strong so we employed a colored woman to come in once a week and do the cleaning, and what laundry we could not send out.

In April 1931 the World Conference on Work for the Blind was held in New York City. The invitation issued by President Hoover through the State Department was accepted by thirty-seven countries, and about one hundred foreign delegates met with our own representatives. For those privileged to attend this conference it was an event of a lifetime. The deliberations were characterized by earnest, thoughtful attention on the part of all present. A

spirit of open-mindedness prevailed, a recognition of problems yet unsolved, and a real desire to share experience and learn of others.

I was unable to attend the World Conference in New York City as it came at the time of the American Red Cross Convention in Washington, D. C. We now had a Braille Round Table in connection with the Annual Conventions. They were always well attended and seemed most profitable. It was very important that I should be present at this Round Table. I was greatly disappointed at not attending the World Conference, but many of the foreign delegates came to Washington later and I had the opportunity to meet them.

In the summer of that year Emma and I took a trip through Eastern Canada, spending several days in Montreal; and down the St. Lawrence by boat to Quebec for a week in that historic city. We returned to Montreal, went by train to Portland, Maine, where we spent a few days, and on to Boston by bus. Here we had another delightful week at the Statler Hotel. While there we took several interesting side trips, one of which was to "The Wayside Inn," famous in Longfellow's poems. The place had been reconditioned and restored with much of the original furniture, and all through the generosity of Henry Ford. On the grounds stand the school house famous for "Mary and Her Little Lamb," which I learned was historically a true story and not a fairy tale as I had always supposed. In fact, the Librarian at Perkins Institution, Miss Mary Sawyer, claimed to be a descendant of that famous "Mary."

During the following winter I developed an annoying cough which baffled various doctors and resisted all remedies. When the spring of 1932 came I was so worn out that I was obliged to go to bed, and remained there for about three months with several doctors in consultation and a nurse. By the first of September I was sufficiently recovered to return to the office where I found everything in excellent condition. During my illness, whenever I was able, some of my staff visited me in my home and I advised and gave dictation. I had the confidence of my superiors

and was allowed to do considerable of my work at home. My staff now numbered six regular employees and three or four extras in busy times. Each of the six was an expert in his and her own line. While I had assigned their work and planned it in the beginning, each was capable of carrying on with very little supervision. Above all, they felt a personal interest and pride in what they were doing.

Miss Violet M. Savage had proved a most faithful and capable secretary. In my absence from the Library she was practically in charge. We learned to work together as one. There were the Annual Reports to the Red Cross and Library of Congress to be gotten out; special material to be compiled; the preparation of my papers for conventions; difficult correspondence; daily records to be kept; and the Manuals and other publications which had to be frequently revised. In all this work Miss Savage proved herself invaluable to me; besides she had the real interest of the work at heart and loved it as I did.

My return to work had been premature. Soon other troubles developed and early in November I went home again to prepare for an operation. The surgeon, supposed to be one of the best in Washington, made a mistake in his diagnosis and so had to perform two operations. He considered me in a very serious condition, and told both my sister and doctor that he did not think I had a chance. To his surprise and that of everyone about me, I was soon on the mend and in two weeks was able to leave the hospital and return home. The day after my operation was election day, when Herbert Hoover was so badly defeated and Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected for the first time. I was deeply disappointed -- but not even that could hinder my recovery. After New Year's day, January 1933, I was able to return to work and in a few weeks the cough which had been with me so long disappeared.

Back at my desk I took up the work with renewed strength and enthusiasm to carry on for six more busy, happy years. Braille Transcribing had spread all over the United States and even into some of its territories. Hundreds of transcribed books

were going each year into established libraries and new collections were being started. Our work for students had become a vital part of the educational system. I worked hard and my responsibilities were great. Still it was all easier than it had been back in the beginning. Then I had worked under supervision and much of my work had required physical effort. Now it was largely mental and my mind had always been stronger than my body. I had learned a lot by experience and had gained in self-confidence and the ability to inspire others.

For one who has initiative, who can take responsibility and keep his head in the face of difficulties, who can get along with all kinds of people, I believe that an executive position is far easier than doing the routine work. This is especially true of one without sight for as has been so aptly said: "The mind hath a thousand eyes." The loss of physical sight cannot impair their vision but rather makes it more keen and efficient. All my life I had been learning. It seemed that each experience had in a way prepared me for what I was now accomplishing, and the joy and pleasure it brought me was in itself satisfying and rewarding.

When in 1917 we adopted Braille, Grade One and a Half, we thought our troubles were over. But no sooner were we launched on the new system than murmurings arose. It was said that we had no uniformity since England continued to use Grade Two, which was far more highly contracted than our braille. At the World Conference in 1931 it was decided to have a joint committee of English and Americans to study the whole matter. In the spring of 1932 this committee met in London and again I was urged to be one of the American representatives. At that very time I was sick in bed and had to turn down another opportunity to go abroad -- and that proved to be my last chance. Later, as a result of this meeting, it was decided to adopt English Braille, Grade Two, as our standard type. However, the Americans reserved the right to retain certain forms and usages. This meant the formulating of new rules for the use of publishers and transcribers.

The whole matter was discussed at the Convention of the A. A. W. B., held in Richmond, Va., in June 1933, and which I was able to attend. Another committee was appointed. It consisted of five members representing the American Association of Workers for the Blind, the American Association of Instructors for the Blind, and the American Foundation for the Blind. I was one of the appointees and I gave considerable time and thought to the work. In March of 1934 I went to New York City to meet with the committee and again in June to St. Louis, Mo., for the same purpose. We drafted workable rules for Standard English Braille, Grade Two, and later I prepared a Manual based on these rules for the use of our transcribers. All this required a vast amount of time and hard work; and alas! -- even today, years later -- we are still far from having one uniform point system in this country!

In 1935 the Library of Congress sent me to Louisville, Ky., as its representative to the National Convention of the A. A. W. B. There I read a paper on the establishment of a Students' Library, a matter which was very near to my heart. In 1936 Emma and I attended the National Convention of the American Red Cross which met in Chicago at the Hotel Stevens. At the close of the meeting we spent a few days visiting our niece Nettie. It was at this Convention that the Red Cross adopted a system of retirement to be effective at the age of sixty-five. I was already past this age, but as I was not yet eligible to retire from the Library I offered my services as a volunteer to the Red Cross until such time as I should retire from the Library. My offer was accepted, and I was given the title of Director of Braille.

One of my assistants, Miss Catherine L. Grady, was obliged to leave at once as she had already reached the retirement age. This gave me an opportunity to select someone to fill her place, someone who later could take my position. I chose Miss Alice Rohrback of Braddock Heights, Md. Miss Rohrback, a graduate of the Pittsburgh School for the Blind, and Hood College, Frederick, Md., had also taken the Harvard Course at Perkins Institution. She had

frequently worked with us as an extra helper. She was in her middle thirties, totally blind but very normal, and had a pleasing personality. I felt she had many qualities to recommend her for the position. She came to us in August 1936 and thus she had nearly two years of contact with the work. I gave her every opportunity to observe all phases of it at close range, and become familiar with the many problems with which she would have to cope as my successor.

The Seventeenth Biennial Convention of the A. A. W. B. met at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Canada, the last week of June 1937. It was a large and very important gathering. Approximately five hundred persons were in attendance, about half of them being blind. Emma and I attended and this was out last Convention. These occasions offered opportunity for the workers for the blind from all parts of the country to meet and discuss their various problems. The meetings had proved most profitable to me because of their inspiring contacts. Friendships formed there had been of the greatest value. I generally had an active part in the programs.

At the Toronto Convention I presented two papers. One on "The Place and Influence of Hand-copied Books in Libraries for the Blind," was read by my sister at the Librarians' Round Table. The other on "Red Cross Activities on Behalf of the Blind," was read in the general meeting by one of our volunteer braillists, Mr. Guy R. Sherman of Cleveland, Ohio. My old aversion for appearing in public still persisted and whenever I could I delegated the reading to others. During the convention one heard many expressions of appreciation for the Braille Transcribing work of the American Red Cross. All my papers presented through the years at these conventions will be found in their printed reports.

And now the year 1938 arrived, when after reaching my seventy-second birthday I decided it was time to retire without asking for a further extension. Early in January I announced my retirement to my staff, which caused something of a stir among them for they had not expected it so soon. On my

recommendation, Miss Rohrback would be placed on the Library pay roll immediately after my retirement, which was now fixed for April 30, 1938.

As the news spread of my separation from the service many letters of sincere regret began to arrive, and from all my associates came expressions of the most friendly appreciation -- all very comforting to me. On a lovely spring day, my Book Committee arranged a luncheon party for me at a Tea House in nearby Virginia. The District of Columbia Chapter of the Red Cross also gave me a luncheon which was attended by their officers, transcribers, and all those interested in the Braille Service. There were several speeches, and from the Chapter I received the gift of a beautiful Needle Point bag. Miss Mabel T. Boardman, with whom I had worked for so many years, presented me with a check for Two Hundred and Thirty Dollars ($230.00), representing the volunteer contributions of groups throughout the country whose braille work I had supervised.

The climax was a party given one evening by the members of my staff which now numbered ten in all, and several close relatives and friends. It was held at the home of Mrs. Maude G. Nichols, my coworker for many years. It was a memorable occasion with music, speeches, fun and refreshments. The staff presented me with an elegant suitcase and a "Memory Book." This last was in loose-leaf form and contained a braille page contributed by each member expressing commendation of my work and good wishes for the future. Later Miss Savage included in this book all the letters and press notices relating to my retirement. It is now one of my most treasured possessions.

The American National Red Cross held its Annual Convention that spring (May 1938) in San Francisco, Calif. Miss Boardman asked me to attend, and offered to pay all my expenses and that of my guide. I appreciated her offer but declined. I was leaving the Service and I could see no point in my going to this Convention, pleasant as it might have been personally. I felt that it would be a fitting introduction for my successor and so explained to

Miss Boardman. Accordingly, Miss Rohrback, accompanied by her mother, went to California and attended the Convention where she met many of those with whom she would work in the years to come.

All through April I was more than busy at the office, clearing my desk and trying to leave everything in as good shape as possible for my successor. I was far too busy to give much thought to the future. I hardly realized that I was at last to give up the work in which I had been engaged for nearly twenty years. It had been the greatest achievement of my life, something for which it seemed all the rest had been planned. To it I had brought all the knowledge and experience of those early years -- and I had given to it my very best. In return I had won a measure of success, had seen much good accomplished, made many wonderful friends, and now I could retire with an annuity for the rest of my life.

There had been other compensations. Our volunteer transcribers were for the most part superior people, educated, cultured and refined. It was delightful to know them even by correspondence. Over the years many found their way to Washington and I had the pleasure of meeting them personally. With my sister I had travelled widely in this country, generally in the interest of our work. The memory of those travels, what I saw and experienced, enriched my life not only then but through all the years that followed. There was the pleasant social intercourse with my associates; also luncheons with the Junior League; banquets of the Red Cross; and the garden parties and teas at the White House. All these were behind me but the memories would remain.

Throughout the years the Library of Congress and the American Red Cross were the co-sponsors of Braille Transcribing. The Library lent its name and prestige and unusual facilities to aid the Red Cross in this nation-wide service to the blind. The Librarian, Doctor Herbert Putnam, and his staff appreciated the sponsorship of the Red Cross and always manifested a friendly interest in the work. The Red Cross, which had largely financed this project, had been deeply grateful to them for their

prompt, courteous and efficient cooperation, without which it would have been impossible to carry on.

The last day at the office fell on a Saturday. I was much surprised and touched to receive visits from the Librarian and many of those high up among the Library personnel. Doctor Putnam had always been most kind to me; but others came who were little known to me and I thought they had scarcely even heard of my existence. Some of these told me they had watched my work and read my reports with a great deal of interest, and now they wanted to congratulate me on what I had done and wish me well. Finally, I locked the office door for the last time, turned the key over to an assistant and went home.

RETIREMENT

One should prepare for retirement just as one makes ready for a career -- but few are wise enough to do so. I had known for two years when I would retire but I obstinately put it out of my mind. It did not seem possible that I could ever be separated from the work I loved so dearly. Then at the last, I began to look forward to laying down what had become something of a burden. When the day came I was only too glad to retire and enjoy what many spoke of as "a well earned rest."

At home I found it quite different from the old days when I had been the homemaker. We had employed a housekeeper for several years. Sometime before I retired Mrs. Edith Darr had found our housework too much for her and we had engaged a Mrs. Emma Clokey to take her place, but Mrs. Darr stayed on as a paying guest at a nominal price. Since her retirement, Emma had planned and directed affairs at home so it was no longer necessary for me to do anything about the house. I was now at liberty to indulge my fancy and spend my time in any way I chose. For the first few weeks I thoroughly enjoyed my freedom from responsibility and the strain of going back and forth to work each day. I slept long hours and relaxed on the front porch.

To complete my rest period Emma and I went to Atlantic City for a week in June of 1938. We had made it a practice to visit this resort at least once a year for rest and relaxation. We always stayed at our favorite hotel and even had the same room. We had both come to love the ocean; we enjoyed the piers; the boardwalk with its many shops; the rides in the wheeled chairs. We also liked to lie in the beach chairs down on the sand and listen to the waves as they rolled in and broke upon the shore. I think we both realized that this might be our last visit to Atlantic City, and so it proved. I returned home rested and refreshed, and ready to take up the

threads of a new life and weave a pattern according to God's will. I had never enjoyed idleness and now I knew that I must find something to occupy my days and make my life worth living. I took up crocheting and soon had the house decorated with my handiwork.

Mrs. Darr was a most congenial companion and our home life was very pleasant but it was soon to be broken. In September she was taken very ill and had to be removed to the hospital. We notified her daughter who now lived in Omaha, Nebraska. She came at once and stayed with us. Emma accompanied her nearly every day to the hospital and helped her with business matters. After three weeks of suffering the dear soul passed away. When the funeral was over and the daughter had returned home life went on as before, but we were lonely.

Two years before my retirement I had purchased one of the "Talking Book" machines developed by the American Foundation for the Blind, of which Mr. Robert B. Irwin was now the Executive Director. This machine, which is something like a victrola, reproduces recordings of books made by selected readers. In this way one may listen to his favorite classic or best seller read in a most acceptable manner, turning it on and off at his pleasure or convenience. While I was at work I had little time to use this machine, but now that I was at home it became and has continued to be a great source of comfort and pleasure to me.

These recorded books which are produced at government expense are owned by the Library of Congress and distributed among twenty-seven regional libraries, from which they are loaned to readers in their vicinity. Machines for reproducing these records are also the property of the Library and are freely loaned to readers. However, some readers like myself prefer to have their own machines and are allowed to purchase them. All this was brought about through the efforts of the American Foundation under the leadership of Mr. Irwin. I consider this one of the greatest blessings ever conferred upon sightless readers. Machines have continued to improve and more and more books have been recorded

until now one may have almost anything he wishes to read. Emma had read a great deal to me and she was a delightful reader, but it was not so easy for her now as in former years. Hence you can imagine my joy in the "Talking Book." For the first time I could actually read when and what and as much as I liked without any help from others. This made me very happy.

Since the appearance of the Matilda Ziegler Magazine in 1907 many other periodicals in braille had come into circulation. Some were of general interest; others were intended for certain groups, such as "The Outlook for the Blind," "The Home Teacher," "Our Special" (a magazine for women), "Braille Radio News," and others. I now received and read about a dozen of these each month and enjoyed them all. I had been asked to contribute articles to some of these magazines which I did from time to time. My early ambition to be a writer had long since been abandoned. What little talent I had in that direction had for many years gone into the writing of letters, reports, papers and other material needed in my work. I had learned that to be a successful writer one must have more than the desire to write and a fair gift of expression. One must have a broad experience and learn the technique of writing which is an art in itself.

The District of Columbia Association of Workers for the Blind made me Chairman of its Beneficiary Committee and I sought to enlarge its usefulness to some of our needy and shut-in blind. With the financial backing of the Association and through the generosity of my friends, we were able to provide Christmas luncheons for many who would otherwise have had little festivity. We also gave Christmas baskets to needy families and to shut-ins. We remembered many on birthdays and in time of sickness; and in various other ways tried to spread a little sunshine and good will among our people.

The District Chapter of the American Red Cross sought my help in its braille work, as did other individuals. For several years I did considerable proofreading, mostly as a voluntary service. I enjoyed it as it brought me continued intercourse with

some of those with whom I had previously been associated, and who remained my good friends. Among them was Mrs. W. A. Maxwell and Mrs. Henry Rule, both former transcribers. Mrs. W. W. Chiswell, who had been one of our volunteer workers, gave generously to aid me in all my charitable undertakings. Occasionally I spent a day at the Library of Congress among my old associates. These were pleasant occasions but I had determined that I would never seek in any way to interfere or criticize the work of my successor, and I never did. Hence, Miss Alice Rohrback and I have been the best of friends.

So the years passed quietly with only a few outstanding events. To some this might have seemed a rather drab existence as compared with my previous years at the Library; but to me it was pleasant and satisfying. Fortunately, I was always one who found pleasure in the simple, everyday things of life, the changing seasons, a good book, the accomplishment of small tasks. These all filled me with deep content and quiet satisfaction. Above all, I enjoyed the daily companionship of my dear sister and I shall always be thankful for those last few years we had together.

In the spring of 1940 we renovated our house, papering, varnishing woodwork, refinishing floors and painting outside. In May we had a visit from our relatives in Iowa -- Fred Hoyt and wife Elizabeth -- and Fred's sister Carrie. Fred and Carrie were the children of our oldest sister Clara and Frank Hoyt, my father's half-brother; thus they were doubly related to me and we were glad to see them. They drove through in their car and stayed about ten days. After their departure we had a short visit from our great nephew, Hoyt Hammer and his wife Naoma from Cincinnati, Ohio. Hoyt was the son of our niece Nettie and grandson of sister Mary. In subsequent years I learned to know these two well and I loved them dearly.

About the same time I received a letter from the American Foundation for the Blind, New York City, which read as follows:

"Dear Miss Hoyt:

As you possibly know, our Foundation awards each year a medal donated by Mr. Migel for Outstanding Service to the Blind, and the recipients since the first presentation in 1937 have been Hon. William Nelson Cromwell, Mr. Walter G. Holmes, and Mr. H. Randolph Latimer.

It is a pleasure and honor to inform you that the Committee on Award, consisting of Doctor Helen Keller, Mr. Harvey D. Gibson, Mr. M. C. Migel, Mr. William Ziegler, Jr., have unanimously designated you to receive this Medal for the year 1940.

It is offered to you as a slight token in recognition of your devoted labors for the blind in many directions, but most particularly for your outstanding achievements in developing the Braille Hand-Transcribing Service of the American Red Cross which provides such urgently needed literature to blind readers.

It is the earnest hope of the Committee that you may accept this Medal as a symbol of gratitude both from the blind and from those who labor to promote their welfare.

This Medal is to be presented to you in person at the next annual meeting of the Membership of the Foundation, to be held in New York some time in June, and we shall communicate with you later as to the exact date.

In the meantime, our congratulations and kindest regards to you. I assure you this is a personal pleasure also."

(Signed) H. M. McManaway,
Secretary.

It will be noted that I was the first woman to receive this honor, and naturally I was thrilled! The daily papers in Washington, D. C., and the radio made mention of it although I never knew who was responsible for this publicity. The award was made on

June 20th and the presentation was by Doctor Helen Keller. Emma and I went up the afternoon before and put up at the Pennsylvania Hotel. It was unseasonably cold but the next afternoon we wore our prettiest summer frocks for it was more or less a social occasion. Many of the leaders in work for the blind were present; also some of the transcribers in and around New York with whom I had been associated in my work. The room was fragrant with many beautiful flowers. Some were personal gifts to me; one box in particular was from the D. C. Association of workers for the Blind. I was also presented with a lovely corsage. Mr. Robert B. Irwin, Executive Director of the American Foundation, presided. Letters and telegrams of congratulations were read from absent friends and all were over-generous in praise. Some of these I quote as follows:

From Mr. H. Randolph Latimer, Executive Secretary, Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, Inc., Harrisburg, Pa., a leader in work for the blind and the recipient of the Award for the previous year:

> "Dear Mr. Migel:
>
> As stated in our reply to your kind invitation, Mrs. Latimer and I will be unable to attend the presentation tea to be given next week in honor of Miss Adelia M. Hoyt. Mrs. Latimer joins me in the following:-
>
> We have known Miss Hoyt for more than a quarter of a century, and have followed her national and international career with much interest since 1913. The very impersonation of all that is refined, cultural, and practical, Miss Hoyt stands out preeminently among workers, blind and sighted alike, for the conquest of blindness in America. It is exceedingly gratifying, therefore, to us that your Committee has seen fit to recognize Miss Hoyt's magnificent service by presenting her this year with the Foundation (Migel) Medal for Distinguished Service."
>
> (Signed) H. R. Latimer.

From Miss Mabel T. Boardman, Director of Volunteer Service, American National Red Cross, Washington, D. C.:

"Dear Miss Hoyt:

I am asking Mr. Migel to read this little letter as I deeply regret that my absence in Canada, on June 20th, prevents my being present at the presentation to you of the Medal for Outstanding Service to the Blind, for the year 1940.

I want to add an expression of deep admiration for and appreciation of the work that you accomplished during the many years you were associated with the Red Cross in its service of transcribing books for the blind. Your ability, your devotion and your excellent judgment were of invaluable help in this important work; and those of us at the Red Cross who were associated with you desire to extend to you our heartiest congratulations on this recognition of your services.

With very many cordial regards, I am."

(Signed) Mabel T. Boardman.

From Mr. M. C. Migel, President, American Foundation for the Blind, New York City:

"Doctor Helen Keller:

Please express to Miss Hoyt my great happiness in the Committee's decision awarding her the Medal for Outstanding Service to the Blind.

Miss Hoyt represents in her life work for the blind a vivid example of the great possibilities inherent in all those without physical sight in bringing happiness to their fellow men.

Also express my sincere regret in being unavoidably unable to be present."

(Signed) M. C. Migel.

Doctor Helen Keller's presentation speech was as follows:

"Dear Friends:

It is a happy privilege for me to put the Award of Merit into Adelia Hoyt's seeing hands. Of course it flatters my feminine heart because it is a woman who is being honored.

But words cannot do justice to Miss Hoyt's courage and devotion to the sightless during nearly a lifetime. Darkland is brighter because she has lived in it. The work she has directed -- the varied activities of Braille transcribers to illumine shadows with a million points of light -- is a prophecy of the higher capabilities which the blind will some day unveil.

Miss Hoyt's painstaking labor is a quality which the blind imperatively need if they are to further the conquest of their handicap. How ably she has served in many vineyards of endeavor! With what cheerful faith she has dived into one breaker of difficulty after another, and emerged the richer in counsel and example! May God's Smile in her soul bring the peace that springs from a brave life well spent, is my affectionate wish."

I quote my reply and acceptance of the award:

"Doctor Keller, Mr. Irwin, Members of the Foundation, and others:

This happy occasion fills me with mingled emotions chief among which are deep humility and a keen appreciation not only for this award so gratiously bestowed, but also for the many kind felicitations of my friends. I realize that there are many who have done far more than I, and my sincere hope is that each one will some day know the joy of having his work recognized. We all long to do so much that what we really accomplish seems small in comparison.

My work has been largely that of a pioneer. Back in Iowa even before I left school I became interested in work for the blind. There was plenty of room in those days for pioneer effort. I helped to organize the Iowa State Association and the Des Moines Association for the Blind, and to found the Iowa Home for Sightless Women. All of these are now functioning successfully. When I came to Washington, D. C. I joined forces with our people there. When later there was need of Braille Transcribing for the War-Blind, I volunteered my help and soon became a paid worker. I count it a privilege to have had a part in developing that great service among the volunteers of the Red Cross.

I should like here and now to pay tribute to some of those who have helped me all along the way. First to the Iowa School for the Blind where I received my elementary education. I still feel that it was one of the best schools of its kind at that time. It may have lacked the equipment found in some of our eastern schools, but we were fortunate in having as superintendent a scholarly man. A college man himself, he gave to our school the atmosphere of a college and inspired in his students the desire for higher education.

I feel that I owe much to my family. They were plain people, but great readers and placed a high value on education. Yet with all, they were very practical. I was never allowed to think that society owed me anything because of my handicap, but I was taught that I must give for value received. I was blessed with the help of a devoted sister who has always been my companion, adviser, my severest critic and best friend. She has been eyes for me all along the way.

When I entered the Library of Congress, Mrs. Gertrude T. Rider, now Mrs. Fred Harpham,

was in charge of the Service for the Blind. It was she who organized Braille Transcribing. It was she who recommended me to the Red Cross and the Library of Congress and thus gave me my big chance. Here again was pioneering needed. We had to overcome the prevailing prejudice against hand-copied books, to evolve courses of study for training transcribers and proofreaders, and to meet and overcome many other new problems; and in all this Mrs. Rider was most efficient. At first I took the place of a sighted secretary and those first years were hard indeed. But Mrs. Rider had confidence in me, more than I had in myself. She expected much but was always kind and considerate, never withholding criticism but generous in deserved praise.

Most of you are familiar with the story of those years. You know how our work grew, how I passed from secretary and typist to Assistant Director, and after Mrs. Rider's resignation I became Director of Braille for the Red Cross. I began with one assistant; when I retired in 1938 there were ten. Much credit also belongs to my loyal and efficient staff. Miss Savage, my faithful secretary for so many years, and Miss Rohrback my successor, are here today to share in the pleasure of this occasion.

In the braille work of the Red Cross I have always felt that the credit and glory belong almost entirely to that noble band of volunteer transcribers who give so many hours of unselfish labor to their work. No amount of praise and commendation is too great for them, and I am proud indeed if in any small way I have been able to help them in their wonderful service of love. In honoring me as you have today you are honoring all of these and all others who have helped me along the way. In this spirit I accept this beautiful medal and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

> Whenever the road has seemed especially rough, when difficult problems have presented themselves, when there have been special reports, papers or speeches to prepare, I have always breathed a prayer for help and guidance to do and say just the right thing, not for self-glory but for the good of the cause, and always help has come. Truly it is given to some of us to sow the seed, to others to water and cultivate it, while still others reap the fruit and gather in the harvest, but it is God alone who giveth the increase."

I spoke extemporaneously although I had formulated in my mind the main points I wished to bring out. I realized that it was one of the great moments of my life, but I was never more at ease. Perhaps this was because I was not thinking of myself so much as of those who had made it possible for me to do what I had accomplished, for which I was now being honored. The speeches were followed by a social hour during which tea was served. It was all a most pleasant and happy occasion.

Shortly after we arrived at our hotel we were surprised to have Miss Savage and Miss Rohrback drop in on us for an hour's visit before taking the train back to Washington. This was Thursday and we remained in New York until Saturday when we returned home. Here again we both had a premonition that this might be our last trip together, and this foreboding was to be fulfilled.

At Christmas 1940 we had as a guest our old friend, Ira Hoff, from Warren, Pa. His wife, my dear friend Hattie, had passed away just before my retirement. She had been ill for some time but her death came as a great shock and for a time overshadowed all my personal affairs. I had looked forward to spending many pleasant days with her after I retired. Now this was not to be. Her going took away one of my best girlhood friends whose place could never be filled. Their two sons were now married. Ira had for many years been at the head of the Hoff Business College in Warren, Pa., and he was

still carrying on with the help of his oldest son. We greatly enjoyed the few days he spent with us.

In 1941 we were again at war and everything was different. Travel for pleasure was difficult and discouraged. We had no inducement nor purpose to go places, so we remained quietly at home. Emma was failing in some ways. She was now past eighty; in possession of all her faculties but her strength was diminishing. She still continued to look after business matters but everything was a burden and anxiety to her. Mrs. Emma Clokey left us to make a home for her son and later when he was drafted she secured a government position. A Mrs. Emma Neff, a country woman from up in Virginia, came to keep house for us, but she disliked the city and only remained for a few months.

In the fall of 1942 I had quite a severe sick spell following an earlier attack of pneumonia. My recovery was impeded by worry over our situation as I knew my sister could not do the housework and care for me. A colored woman, Leah by name, who had been coming once a week for years to clean and wash for us did what she could, but she was leaving town with her husband. In spite of all, I began to improve and by Christmas I was up and around. Leah sent us a colored girl for part time, and she remained until April 1943.

As much as the war affected our home life it had other results which interested me. Because of the extra burden which the war imposed on the American National Red Cross, it felt obliged at the end of 1942 to discontinue the work of Braille Transcribing which it had fostered for nearly twenty-four years. The Library of Congress undertook to carry on but with a much curtailed program. In the reorganization fewer workers were required at the Library. Miss Violet Savage, who had been the Red Cross Secretary in the Service for the Blind for over twenty years, was returned to Red Cross Headquarters. She received several promotions and was finally appointed Administrative Assistant, which position she held until her enforced retirement on May 1, 1949, due to her health.

Braille Transcribing at the Library of Congress was now included in the new Division of Books for the Adult Blind, and under Miss Alice Rohrback it specialized in aiding students. Many of the Red Cross braillists throughout the country continued their work, mostly as a local project, assisting libraries, blind students and other individuals in their immediate vicinities.

The war news was most depressing and had its effect upon my sister. She would listen to the news broadcasts and read the papers constantly. She could hardly bear to have me out of her sight, and I regret now that I ever left her even though it seemed necessary at the time, for on my return I would find her almost in a state of nervous collapse. Since the spring of 1943 we had a very good colored woman with us named Lillian. She gave us only part time but was most efficient.

The next winter passed uneventfully and the spring of 1944 was at hand. Easter was on the 9th of April, a beautiful day. For a long time Emma had been unable to attend church and on this lovely Sunday afternoon we sat on the porch for an hour or more. She seemed to enjoy this little outing. On April 25th Emma told me she was not feeling well and complained of being very tired. She had had chronic bronchitis for years and it was now more acute. The next day I persuaded her to remain in bed and I sent for the doctor.

Our former family physician had retired and the one we had since had now gone to war. In my last illness I had called in a doctor recommended by one of our neighbors. Neither sister nor I liked the man but he had brought me through and now in lieu of anyone else I called him. From a medical standpoint he may have been all right, but his sick room manners were atrocious. He was uncouth to an extreme, loud voiced and brutally blunt. My sister took a decided aversion to him and evidently the dislike was mutual. He stormed at her and threatened to send her to a sanitarium if she did not obey his orders. All this tended to aggravate rather than help her condition.

During her long life Emma had rarely been ill or required any personal care. She had been the tower of strength on which I had leaned and she had cared for me through many long illnesses. Now it was up to me to care for her. God gave me the strength to do it for which I shall always be grateful. After the first week a friend, Miss Lucy Cardwell, came and stayed with me at night but I continued to care for Emma night and day. At the end of two weeks I realized that I could not go on that way. The doctor sent us a night nurse. She was much like the doctor and not very efficient; but doctors and nurses were hard to get in those days, and it did give me a chance to get some sleep and Miss Cardwell could go home. However, she came in nearly every day and was a great help and comfort. Other friends and neighbors were most kind and anxious to be of assistance. But the doctor forbade all company in the sick room because of my sister's highly nervous condition. Lillian was now coming every day and was not only the best of help in the kitchen, but kept the house in perfect order and assisted me greatly in the sick room during the day.

From the first I felt that the end was not far off, but could not believe that it would come so soon. I tried to look ahead and plan for weeks, perhaps months. The month of May came and went -- very warm. Our roses were beautiful that year and with them and flowers sent by friends, Emma's sick room was kept sweet and lovely. She was able to appreciate them and for a long time took an interest in all that went on. She would ask to see the papers morning and evening and would read the head lines. She wanted me to turn on the radio which was between the twin beds.

After the first two weeks Emma improved slightly and the doctor said she might be up again. But I had no such delusion. She was growing weaker and at times did not seem to be herself. She had difficulty in sleeping and took very little nourishment. Finally, the doctor gave her a more powerful sedative and she was never quite herself afterwards. On June 1st I noticed this especially. I was always alone

with her from the time Lillian left at 4 P. M. until the night nurse came at 9 o'clock. Usually I could leave her and she would call or ring a bell if she wanted anything. But that day I dared not leave her for a moment for she was determined to get out of bed and go downstairs. Once she looked up at me and asked: "Who are you?" That nearly broke my heart.

I slept little that night and knew that I should have a nurse with me for the day. I had been trying for some time to secure one but nurses were hard to get. Early next morning, June 2nd, I called one who had been recommended to me and she was able to come, but only for three hours. I do not think Emma knew me nor the doctor that morning; she was in a sort of coma. A nurse friend, Peggy Arrance, who was just off a case, arrived at noon and was with me when the end came at 2:30 P. M. I sat beside my sister with my hand on her arm until she breathed her last. After that it seemed as if I felt nothing. I do not think I shed a tear but I went about mechanically doing the many things which had to be done. Peggy was wonderful and stayed right by me. She sent telegrams and met the many friends who came and went all that afternoon and evening.

After the doctor had been and all the inevitable questions asked and answered, the undertaker was summoned; and the dear body, the tangible part of my beloved sister, was carried out of the home she had so loved and which she had largely earned and maintained so long. It seemed a cruel thing -- but my friends advised it. As in everything since they did not urge it, yet I knew it was the best way. We could not reach the night nurse so I let her come and stay with me that night. After she arrived and everyone else had gone I took a sleeping tablet and tried to get some rest.

Of all my relatives I knew that no one could come to me except my niece's son, Hoyt Hammer, from Cincinnati, Ohio. I had wired asking that he and his wife, Naoma, would come if possible and I had an immediate reply that they would be here. They arrived the next day, Saturday, and proved a real help and comfort to me. Mrs. Maxwell, Lucy Cardwell

and others, were with me much of the time and anxious to do all they could to be of use to me. But it was, of course, up to me to decide and arrange everything, and with God's help I was able to go through the next three days so that I had nothing to regret later.

On Monday afternoon, June 5th, there was a simple service at the Funeral Home on East Capitol Street. The room was full of kind, sympathetic friends and many beautiful flowers. Doctor John Compton Ball, who had been our Pastor for more than thirty years, gave a wonderfully comforting talk. He and other friends accompanied us to Cedar Hill Cemetery where we laid her to rest in a beautiful spot which we had chosen about three years before. Then I came back to take up life without the one who had so long been my source of strength.

A few years previous I had written some verses and gave them to my sister expressing my appreciation for what she had done for me. Perhaps this is a good place to insert them as a tribute to her memory.

MY SISTER

If I had the tongue of a poet
I would sing of a sister's love,
Unselfish, sustaining, enfolding--
Like the sunshine that falls from above.

If I had the skill of an artist,
I would picture that dear sister's face,
And show you her beautiful spirit
In all of its beauty and grace.

The hands that have toiled for my comfort,
The eyes that have seen for us two,
The voice that bids me take courage,
The heart that is beating so true.

But I'm only a stammering rhymester
Whose verses will falter and fail--
And my pictures are only in fancy,
Their colors to others are pale.

But some day the angels in Heaven
Will sing to that sister of mine
A song that shall tell of her goodness
And of love that is kin to divine!

The day after my sister's funeral, June 6, 1944, was V-E Day and each year as the anniversary comes around it has a double significance for me. Hoyt and Naoma felt they must leave that evening. As they took their departure a gentle rain was falling -- and when I turned back into the lonely, empty house a feeling of utter desolation swept over me. But I would not give way to it. I knew I was not going to be left alone for long. Lucy Cardwell had promised to stay with me nights until I could make other arrangements. She soon arrived.

Miss Cardwell had worked in the office with my sister. She had retired under a special ruling before she reached retirement age in order to care for an invalid mother. Her mother had now passed away and she was quite alone. I knew her to be a person of fine upright character. I had thought it possible she might be willing to give up her apartment and come and live with me as companion. I would gladly have given her a home in return for her company and for what assistance she could render. When I proposed this she very frankly told me that she preferred to live alone. Subsequent events proved the wisdom of her decision but she has remained my staunch friend.

Lucy stayed with me at nights for two weeks. Then I realized she was becoming uneasy and anxious to be at home all the time, so I engaged an elderly woman whom I knew to take her place for awhile. I know my friends were anxious and did not see how I was going to manage. However, they did not try in any way to plan for me nor even suggest what I should do; they just stood by ready to help when and where I needed them. At first I had no definite plan. I only knew I wished to remain, if at all possible, in the home which Emma and I had so long maintained and where we had been so happy together. Where else could I be so content?

For some two years it had been necessary for us to have a lawyer come to the house to make out our Income Tax Returns and attend to other business. As soon as possible I placed my affairs in his hands. According to the terms of Emma's will everything was left to me, including the home, her bank account

and our joint investments. It is surprising how much red tape is required to settle even a small estate with no complications. It entailed many trips with my lawyer to banks, court house and other places. Lucy Cardwell always accompanied me on these occasions and I found her most helpful. For a person without sight everything is bound to be a little more complicated. Fortunately, I was able to write a fairly good signature but I must be shown where to sign.

I had arranged with Lillian, the colored maid, to give me six hours a day excepting Sundays. For this I paid her well. She was capable, intelligent and very pleasant to have around. She kept the house in order and gave me one good meal in the middle of the day; my breakfasts and suppers I prepared for myself. I found that with my annuities from the Library of Congress and the American Red Cross, plus our bank accounts and the dividends on investments, I would be able to carry on.

I soon decided to rent two of my spare rooms. This would add something to my income and what was more important give me companionship at night. Washington was full of people who were having trouble finding suitable living quarters, so I anticipated no difficulty in renting my rooms. Now for the first time I met with some discouragement. Several of my friends warned me that I might get very undesirable tenants and find it hard to get rid of them. Somehow I was not much impressed. My upstairs front bedroom which Emma and I had occupied was a large pleasant room, comfortably furnished with twin beds. At the time I felt I did not care to use the room for myself, so as soon as I had it thoroughly renovated I advertised it in the Library of Congress.

Through a friend in the Library I soon had an applicant. Winifred Hutchings was from Louisville, Ky. She had been in Washington for a year employed in the Library of Congress, and during that time she had changed her rooming place four times. She liked my room and was willing to pay a good price so she could have it all to herself; I agreed. Then I offered a smaller room, rent free, to an employed lady who in return would give me some assistance in her spare

time. Through another friend I found Miss Lena Lanning. So it was that in less than two months after I was left alone I had my new menage running smoothly.

I could not have had two nicer people and I have always felt that they were providentially sent to me. They were refined, educated women and showed me every consideration. In return I tried to make a real home for them. I allowed them to get their breakfast with me Sunday mornings and whenever they were not going to work. It soon came to be a regular thing for us to eat Sunday dinner together. I had Lillian prepare it as far as she could the day before and Miss Lanning and I finished it on Sunday. I found that Miss Lanning was a Baptist. She joined my church and went with me on Sunday mornings. This made it very pleasant for me. Each month she helped me get out my checks in payment of bills. So one after another my problems were solved.

December 1944 arrived. I dreaded Christmas that first year without Emma. We had always made much of the holiday season and I wondered how I was going to get through it. My two ladies were away from their homes and I felt I must do what I could to make it pleasant for them; and I believe they felt the same about me. So the holidays passed more pleasantly than I had expected. My new life was settling into a definite pattern. The coming home each evening of my two "girls," as I called them although each was well past girlhood, was something to which to look forward. I had moved my typewriter and Talking Book downstairs in order that I could better supervise things in the kitchen and answer the door when I was alone in the house.

I had a rather large correspondence and now I could give considerable time to it, for letters meant more than ever to me. My niece, Nettie Hammer, was in poor health and her husband had been crippled in an automobile accident. They had left their home in Chicago and gone to northern Michigan to be near their daughter Mary and her family. Nettie grieved much at not being able to come and help me, but their son Hoyt had come in their place and done what he could. Nettie's letters were then and have continued

to be a source of the greatest help to me. I corresponded with my relatives in Iowa, my nephew Fred Hoyt, and my great-niece Ruth Jenkins. Another correspondent, Jennie Titus, one of my Des Moines friends, had survived Hattie Hoff only a year or two. I heard occasionally from Jean Ohern now living in Oklahoma City, Okla., and others of my long time friends. Anna Dawson, who had been in our home for two years, wrote every other month and I did the same.

I had good neighbors and they were always more than willing to help me. The telephone kept me in touch with a host of friends in Washington. Lucy Cardwell came at least once a week. Mrs. Maxwell had become very dear to me and she and her good husband, Doctor Maxwell, a retired dentist, were often with me in my home and I had many pleasant days with them in their apartment. Through Mrs. Maxwell I came to know the members of her PEO Chapter and sometimes attended their luncheons; they were all wonderful to me. I had occasional visits from my old friends at the Library of Congress; also Violet Savage with whom I had worked so long, her sister Daisy, and others.

Lillian was an excellent cook. She could prepare and serve a meal most acceptably and what was even better she enjoyed my having company. I too loved to entertain and it was great pleasure for me to have many of these good friends in for luncheons or dinners. I had two friends at the Home for the Blind who spent a week with me each summer. One of these was Catherine Grady, who had been one of my helpers at the Library and who had now taken up her residence at the Home. The other was Lilian Latimer. Just a month after my sister's death, H. Randolph Latimer, Lilian's brother, had passed away. Our common sorrow brought us very close together and we have remained so.

Susie Duffy, another of my blind assistants at the Library, had retired three years after I did and gone to live with a niece near Baltimore, Md. She had many friends in Washington and I invited her to come once or twice a year and spend two or three

weeks, making my home her headquarters. Along with all this entertainment I continued to crochet making gifts for my friends; also helping to furnish afghans for hospitals. All these varied activities made for a busy life and far from an unhappy one.

In September 1945 Ira Hoff came for another visit. He had sold his Business College and planned to travel in his car which he had converted so he could sleep and cook in it. Before starting on his western trip he drove to Washington in his car. We had many long rides together which reminded us of the old days; but we both missed our loved ones who had gone. I had Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell and Lucy Cardwell in one day for lunch to meet Ira. They all liked him very much. In return they entertained us at luncheon and dinner. We drove to Mount Vernon and to my friends, the Kales, now living over in Virginia. Everywhere Ira made himself welcome.

War was now over. It was while Ira was with me that we listened to the signing of the treaty with Japan on the battleship "Missouri" in Tokio Harbor. But though the war had ended peace was still far off; in fact as the months went by it seemed even more remote. President Roosevelt's death the spring before had shocked and almost paralyzed the Nation. President Truman was now carrying on. Life did not return to normal; living was still high and many essentials hard to get.

Another winter passed. When Lillian took her long vacation in the summer of 1946 I went to spend a week with my friends, the Kales. Their home was a rambling old house surrounded by ample grounds, wooded and delightful. There was just the three of them. Norma, their only child, was teaching in a high school in Washington. She was having her summer vacation. No one could ask for a better place to rest and relax. How I did enjoy the fresh vegetables from their garden and the big screened porch where I lived most of the day! We often ate our meals on the porch where the birds serenaded us. I came home laden with flowers, fruit and vegetables; rested but glad to be at home again.

Lillian was not doing so well. She came later and left earlier; and was frequently absent for two or three days at a time. She claimed to be ill and I had no reason to doubt her, but it left me alone all together too much. Fortunately, I was not helpless and could look after myself; but the work did fall behind and I often had to do more than I should. It was all right as long as I was well but there was always the possibility that I might be ill. My friends and neighbors worried about my being alone so much.

Winifred Hutchings had never really liked her work in the Library of Congress. There seemed no prospect for any advancement so when she received an offer of a better position in the Cincinnati Public Library she accepted. I think she rather regretted leaving Washington and our home where I believe she had been quite happy. After she had gone I moved back into the front room and gave Miss Lanning the room I had occupied. It was then I decided to employ a white woman for housekeeper, one who would be with us all the time. I remembered Mrs. Emma Neff who had been with us for a few months; I communicated with her and she agreed to come. She arrived on the 1st of December and took over; and this was a great relief to me. It was arranged that Miss Lanning should take all her meals with us. This change was a great improvement as I now had someone with me practically all the time.

In May 1947 Ira Hoff again visited me. As usual we had a round of entertaining and of being entertained. Before we left, Susie Duffy arrived and these two met for the first time. Ira had now crossed the continent about three times in his car and was getting ready for another trip west. Always a great lover of nature nothing of interest escaped him. He visited friends and relatives on these trips, stopping when and where he pleased. He missed no place of historic or geographic interest. Ira loved birds, flowers, animals and people -- and made friends everywhere. He wrote me long interesting letters, often enclosing pressed flowers and leaves; even bird feathers and snap-shots he had taken. He learned braille and often wrote letters which I could read

myself. This all seemed to be quite remarkable for one of his age, since he is just a year my junior.

That summer of 1947 I spent another week with the Kales when Mrs. Neff took her vacation. I was not feeling so well at the time but the change did me good, and with the coming of cool weather I soon picked up again. I no longer had any reason for concealing my age, and my eighty-second birthday, December 3, 1947, was made quite an event by my friends. I was presented with a beautiful birthday cake from Mrs. Maxwell's Chapter N of the PEO Sisterhood. I was showered with cards, letters, flowers and other gifts. Many came in person to congratulate me.

Best of all, Hoyt and Naoma Hammer were there to share the festivities. Hoyt was in the insurance business and had Ohio as his territory. He was called to Baltimore, the headquarters of the company, for a conference and Naoma came with him. I am sure the company did not arrange the time in honor of my birthday but it was a happy coincidence. No matter how much one appreciates good friends the tie of blood kinship is strong. Although Hoyt was only my great nephew his mother and grandmother had been very dear to me, and now I had learned to know and love Hoyt and his wife for themselves.

It is time for this narrative to come to an end. I wonder why I ever started it? What is the urge which drives so many to try to put into words the thoughts and experiences of their lives? In the case of noted personages the effort is justified. No doubt in their case there is a sincere conviction that their life history will be of interest and help to posterity. They may also wish to forestall some less appreciative biographer. With me there is no such delusion. Perhaps it was in part the urge to write which has followed me all through the years; or perhaps I was impelled to relate this story for my own satisfaction. Whatever it may have been, I have enjoyed recalling the events of my life, which if of little account to the world at large, have meant so much to me.

Many speak of the last years of life as going down the sunset slope into the dark valley. To me life is a constant ascent -- a trail that winds ever upward and onward. Sometimes it may be tortuous; often we cannot see far ahead. We may go down into valleys for awhile -- but always we should come up again on to higher ground. The wheels of life keep turning and each year reveals a little more of the pattern we are weaving. Many things which seem strange and out of place the unfolding years fully explain.

Surely I am near the end of the long trail; surely there can be no other change worth recording until the greatest one of all. I have faith to believe that it will be the very best and I wait content for it. I have always liked those lines from Robert Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra"--

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which
the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God:
see all, nor be afraid!"

-- EPILOGUE --

November 1950

How little we know what the future holds! When I wrote those closing lines in the latter part of this narrative I really thought no other change could come to me in this life. As the years had come and gone, bringing new opportunities and new problems, each had been a challenge requiring my best effort. Every accomplishment had brought with it a sense of power and greater strength for the next endeavor. For four years I had managed the affairs of my home and found a real satisfaction in doing it. Most of the time I had good help but the responsibility was all mine. I planned all the meals and I did much of the marketing by telephone. If anything went wrong in the house I had to see to it and so far it had not been too difficult.

Early in 1948 I began to feel the strain and realized that I could not go on in this way indefinitely. Mrs. Neff's mother who lived a few blocks from us was in very poor health. Frequently Mrs. Neff had to leave me for a day or two to care for her. The time might come when she would have to leave altogether. That would mean securing and training a new person and I did not feel equal to such a task. In the natural course of things I would be less and less able to carry on. I considered several plans. I might get a family to take over and allow me to room and board with them; I might find a boarding place with a private family, although I knew it would be difficult; I might go into a nursing home but a good one would be most expensive. All these could only be temporary arrangements subject to human vicissitudes.

The best solution to my problem seemed to be to enter the Home for the Blind in Washington, D. C. I had visited the Home many times and I knew some of the people living there intimately. I had no foolish prejudice against such an institution although up to this time I had never seriously considered entering

the Home. Now it seemed to offer just the security I wanted -- a permanent home with freedom from care and responsibility for the rest of my life. But the question was: "Would I be accepted?" I knew the place was about full and that they had a long waiting list. I made my application in the spring telling them I did not wish to enter until fall, and on those conditions I was accepted. My friends received my decision with mixed reaction. Most of them doubted the wisdom of the move I was making; a few agreed with me that it was the best thing to do. None sought to dissuade me for none had any better plan to suggest. Although they saw the advantages to be gained they feared I would not be happy away from my own home.

The breaking up of my home where I had lived for so many years was no small task and it required real physical and moral courage; but I had all summer in which to do it. Some of my books, pictures, dishes and pieces of furniture which had been admired by certain friends I now gladly gave to them. I reserved some things for relatives and for myself since I had been given the privilege of furnishing my room at the Home. The rest of my belongings I offered for sale. It was strange how things went one by one until the house took on that empty look which sometimes almost brought the tears in secret. It helped a lot to know that my treasured possessions were going mostly to relatives and friends, either as gifts or by sale.

One of the greatest trials I had was the separation from Miss Lena Lanning. She had come to be very near and dear to me -- almost like a sister. I think she felt it too. She was fortunate in obtaining room and board with one of our church ladies just a block from the church. She took with her some of the furniture which had been in her room. I also gave her one of my radios. My large cabinet radio went to another friend. I kept for myself the Zenith Radio, Trans-Oceanic Portable Model, I had won from the "Quiz Kids." I gave farewell dinners to the Kales, the Maxwells and others. Susie Duffy had also decided to go into the Home for the Blind. In September she came for a last visit with me and together we made final arrangements to enter the Home.

Naoma, Hoyt Hammer's wife, had expressed a wish for Emma's desk and some other things, and I had also decided to give her our Haviland china tea set. On the 1st of October she and Hoyt arrived in their car and remained for a few days. Naoma helped me to pack several boxes with bedding, table linen, silver and other articles, for relatives in Michigan and Iowa. Friends with cars had made several trips to the Home with me, taking clothing and small articles. On Sunday afternoon, Hoyt and Naoma took me over with another load and had an opportunity to see my future residence. They left the following Tuesday, their car well packed with some of my choicest belongings.

On Thursday, October 7, 1948, the moving van arrived to transfer the furniture I was taking with me. A friend with a car was standing by to take me; and Mrs. Neff was going along to help me get settled. The neighbors watched my departure with silent misgivings and one dear old lady shed tears. I walked out of the home where I had lived for thirty long, happy years, dry-eyed and intent only on the matter in hand that day. In less than a month the house was sold and occupied. Thus I had burned all my bridges behind me and was fairly launched on a new adventure.

I am sure the Managers of the Home were appalled at the amount of furniture I brought with me but it was not all for myself. By previous arrangement some pieces went to friends living there, and my glider found a resting place on the third floor porch. When I had everything located in my room it seemed rather crowded but I felt I needed it all. It was really a part of my old home transplanted into the new. There was my own rug on the floor, my own bed, my old fashioned bureau, my desk, Talking Book machine, radio, typewriter and three of my favorite chairs. How could I spare any of them? A large closet held my cedar chest, clothing and many other articles including a supply of dishes. Gradually I gave away many things for which I found I had no use.

This Home, which I believe is one of the best of its kind in the country, was established about 1900 in a building downtown and was known as the "Home for the Blind." In 1913 the present structure was erected in Georgetown and the name was changed to the "Henry and Annie Hurt Home for the Blind." This was in recognition of a generous gift from the Hurt family. It stands on an eminence facing Montrose Park and surrounded by many beautiful homes and historic landmarks. The building which is fire-proof consists of three stories above a high basement. There are large screened porches in the rear on all three floors; there is an elevator and every other modern convenience. The house contains sixty-eight rooms, capable of accommodating about forty guests. At present the Superintendent is Mr. George Macatee. He is assisted by his wife who acts as matron, a housekeeper, assistant housekeeper, and a resident nurse. The colored help includes two cooks, four maids and a janitor who lives in the building. A Board of Lady Managers conducts the affairs of the Home while a committee consisting of bankers and business men look after the finances.

Each guest pays whatever he or she can afford and no one is supposed to know what another pays. All have the same privileges and receive the same consideration. Each guest has perfect liberty of action in all personal matters. One may go and come at will, visiting friends and relatives for longer or shorter periods, just so the Home knows where one is and when he is likely to return. In short, it is much like a small hotel with guests who are permanent. The food is abundant and varied, well cooked and served with considerable regard to individual likes and dislikes. At Christmas and on all holidays certain homelike touches are added to make these days festive occasions for the guests.

At the Home I found my two long time friends, Lilian Latimer and Catherine Grady, ready to welcome me and make me feel at home. Ten days after my arrival Susie Duffy came in and was given the room just across the hall from mine. These rooms are on the third floor which some of us feel is the

nicest part of the building. Susie Duffy and I are enjoying a very close and congenial companionship. I soon made other friends among the guests and life here is far from dull.

My outside friends soon became reconciled to this change and they have done much to make my new life pleasant. Most of the residents here have relatives nearby; I have none; but my friends have largely made up for this loss. They come often to see me and I spend many days with them in their homes. The taxicab service is a great blessing to all of us; it gives us a sense of independence as we can call a taxi and go where we like. Miss Lanning continues to be most devoted to me and comes once a week on her day off from work and helps me in many ways. On Sundays when I feel able I call a taxi and go to my church. There I meet Miss Lanning and go home with her for Sunday dinner and a pleasant afternoon, and then back home by taxi. Miss Lanning's landlady always has a nice group at dinner on Sunday and they have made me feel quite at home among them.

Doctor and Mrs. Maxwell have been as kind as if they were my own kin and I have had many pleasant times with them. Lucy Cardwell comes often to see me and I always find something for her and others to do, if it is only to read a letter, for letters from absent friends still play a large part in my life. My nurse friend, Peggy Arrance, has continued to give me much attention. In spite of her busy life she has taken me for rides in her car and to places I wish to go, including visits to the cemetery several times a year. Mrs. Henry Rule is another friend who has stood by, frequently sending me flowers and other gifts to remind me that I am still in her thoughts.

The first summer I was here in the Home I spent another pleasant week with my friends, the Kales, and I have a standing invitation to repeat this visit each year. I have many other friends whose names have not appeared in these pages but whose friendship I prize for they have added much to my happiness. At Christmas and on my birthdays I continue to be showered with cards and letters, and my room is filled with flowers and other gifts. On my

last birthday, my friends from outside planned a surprise party for me here in the Home to which all the guests were invited and refreshments served.

It will soon be two years since I entered the Home for the Blind -- and I have no regrets. Each day that passes I am more and more thankful for its peace and security, and the freedom from all care and responsibility. Up here in my room, surrounded by my personal belongings, I can be alone, rest, read or write, or listen to the radio. I can have plenty of company when I desire. Letters bring absent friends near.

In December I shall be eighty-five. My mind seems to function about as well as ever; my hearing is perfect; but my strength is gradually failing and I find it increasingly difficult to get about. Still I am able to wait on myself and occasionally do a bit for others. Above all I have constantly with me the memories of a long, full and busy life -- and withal, a happy one!

How much has happened during those eighty-five years! In the world of the blind there has been great advancement; not only have the needs of our people become better known but practical means have been found to meet and solve many of their problems. There has been steady progress in the prevention of blindness, in education and industry, and in the production and distribution of more and better literature. Many of those who were leaders in the pioneer work of my days have passed on; their places have been taken by capable young workers and the onward march continues -- for there is still much to be done.

In the general life about me wonderful things have happened! I have seen developed and come into everyday use the radio and telephone, the motion pictures and television, the automobile, the aeroplane, and many other inventions. Two great World Wars have come and gone and now we hear the rumblings of another conflict. Even now is heard the sound of marching feet, the reports of casualties, the talk of atomic and hydrogen bombs. I pray that I may be allowed to depart in peace before the world is plunged

into the holocaust of another global war -- but that is as God wills. Surely I can now say with finality that this is the last scene in the drama of my unfolding years -- but who can tell?

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BRODART Printed in U.S.A.